United Nations CEDAW/C/SUR/1-2

Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

Distr.: General
5 March 2002

Original: English

Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women

Consideration of reports submitted by States parties under article 18 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

Combined initial and second periodic reports of States parties

Suriname*

* The present document is being issued without formal editing.

02-27210 (E) 280602

Country report

Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

Reporting period March 1993-December 1998

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Introduction

The United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) entered into force on 3 September 1981. In Suriname, the Council of Ministers adopted the Convention on 2 April, 1992 (see Council of Ministers missive no. 213/R.v.M. of 13 April, 1992). This Convention was thereupon explicitly approved by the National Assembly on 21 October, 1992, subject to Article 104, Paragraph 1 G.W. (Bulletin of Acts and Decrees 1992 No. 98), while in March 1993 the President of the Republic of Suriname ratified it unconditionally. In accordance with Article 25, Paragraph 4 of the Convention, Suriname deposited the Instrument of Accession with regard to the Convention with the Secretary General of the United Nations on March 1, 1993 (see Memorandum S.G. No. LA41TR/221/1(4-8), dated 21 April, 1993). Subject to Article 27 of the Convention, it entered into force for Suriname on 31 March, 1993.

The purpose of this Convention is to prevent and eliminate all forms of discrimination of women. States are obliged to take all measures, which can contribute to achieving this goal.

In ratifying the Convention, the Republic of Suriname undertook to report to the Secretary General of the United Nations within a year of the adoption of this Convention, and subsequently report once every four years. Suriname is now submitting a report which covers the period March 1993 - December 1998, and which is, therefore, a combined initial and second reporting period.

In 1998, the Ministry of Home Affairs asked the National Women's Movement – a non-governmental organization – to coordinate a study that could lead to the formulation of the CEDAW country report. The choice was made to formulate a national report, with wide support from Government and non-governmental organizations. To that end, the first draft report was discussed in August 1999, during a Workshop of Experts drawn from Government, NGOs, employers' and employees' organizations, and international organizations. The second draft was extensively discussed with representatives of Government, NGOs and other civil society organizations at a conference in November 1999. The Canada Caribbean Gender Equity Fund and the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) provided financial and technical assistance for the process during which this report was discussed and formulated.

Before you lies the final report, which, in accordance with the guidelines of the CEDAW Commission, tests the national legislation and Government and NGO policy against the Convention. In spite of the limited availability and accessibility of reliable statistics, the present report presents a good picture of the situation of women's rights in Suriname for the reference period1993 – 1998.

Socio-Economic Sketch of Suriname

Geographical Position and History

Suriname lies between 2° and 6° North latitude and 54° and 58° longitude West. It lies on the continent of South America and is bordered to the North by the Atlantic Ocean, to the East by French Guiana, to the South by Brazil, and to the West by Guyana.

The indigenous inhabitants of Suriname are Amerindians. Following various attempts at colonization by European powers in the 16th and 17th centuries, the first permanent plantation colony was founded in 1650. The Netherlands conquered the colony in 1667 and remained its ruler, with the exception of the period 1804 – 1816, when Suriname was temporarily in English hands. The plantation economy, which was introduced from the time of first settlement, was based on cheap labor. The first laborers came from Africa (black slaves) and after the abolition of slavery in 1863, indentured laborers were recruited from India (1873) and Indonesia (1890). Indentured laborers had been imported to Suriname from China earlier, in 1853. Suriname became an independent state in 1975.

Suriname is divided into 10 Districts, which are in turn subdivided into about 62 Administrative Jurisdictions (see Table 1). The capital is Paramaribo, and the Distrioct of Paramaribo counts the majority of the inhabitants (about 53% of the total population). About 90% of the population lives in the coastal area. South of the coastal area is inhabited mainly by tribal peoples, i.e. the Amerindians and Maroons.

Climate

Suriname has a tropical climate. The average temperature is 27° Celsius (80° Fahrenheit).

Demographic Data

Table 1a: Demographic Data, 1993 through 1997*

Items:	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997
Population as of 1/1	404159	403483	406543	411189	415666
Births	8398	8418	8717	9393	10794
Deaths	2998	2842	2696	2894	2878
Natural Increase	5400	5576	6021	6499	7916
Immigration	2007	1393	1316	1618	2074
Emigration*	9083	3809	2691	3640	3481
Net Migration	-7076	-2516	-1375	-2022	-1407
Population Growth	-676	3060	4646	4477	6509
Rough Birth Rate	23.27	20.78	21.32	22.72	25.77
Rough Death Rate	7.42	7.02	6.59	7.00	6.87
Population as of 31 Dec	403483	406543	411189	415666	422175
Average Population	403821	405013	408866	413428	418921

Source: General Bureau of Statistics, June 1999

*The emigration figures are derived from immigration figures of the Central Bureau of Statistics in the Netherlands and thus only reflect migration between Suriname and the Netherlands.

In 1998, life expectancy at birth was 68 years for men and 70 years for women[1]. The infant mortality rate (children younger than 1 year) was 16.4 per 1000 live births in 1992; the maternal mortality rate in the same year was 22.4 per 10,000 pregnant women. In 1991 the total fertility rate was 2.2. children per woman.

[1] Core Document Forming Part of the Report of States Parties. Suriname, February 1998

Table 2 shows that about 50.1% of the Surinamese population is male, while women make up 49.1% of the population. The percentage of children under 15 years of age was 33.6% (135,496) in 1993; 33.3% (134,728) in 1994; 32.9% (134,576) in 1995 and 34% in 1997.
In the same period, 7.1% (28,820), 7.3% (29,708) and 7.6% (30,878), respectively, of the population was 60 years of age and older.

Suriname has a multi-ethnic population consisting of indigenous people or Amerindians (about 2%), Maroons (about 10%), Creoles (about 35%), Hindustani (about 34%), Javanese (about 16%), Chinese (about 2%), Lebanese and descendents of Europeans (about 0.5%) and others (see Table 3). Each of these ethnic groups has its own language. At least 15 languages are spoken in Suriname, including:
2 Amerindian languages: Carib and Arawak
3 Creole languages: Njuka, Saramaka, Sranan Tongo
3 Asian languages: Sarnami Hindi, Surinamese Javanese, Hakka Chinese
2 Western languages: Dutch and English
Dutch is the official language, and Sranan Tongo is the lingua franca.[2]

In Suriname there are about 170,100 Christians (42%), 109,350 Hindus (27%), 81,000 Muslims (20%) and 44,550 persons (11%) with a different religious background. The Indigenous Peoples, Maroons and Jews are among those counted in the last category.[3]

Literacy

Table 1b: Population Literacy Levels in Households in the Districts of Paramaribo and Wanica, 1993-1996

	1993 in %	1994 in %	1995 in %	1996 in %
Men	84.4	88.9	91.0	91.6
Women	84.2	86.9	88.7	89.5
Total	84.3	87.9	89.8	90.5

Source: *Households in Suriname 1993-1997*, General Bureau of Statistics, Department of Household Statistics

The table shows that in the most densely populated districts of Paramaribo and Wanica the literacy rate of women is slightly lower than that of men.

Social Benefits

The annual number of children for whom the Government pays Child Allowance, is presented in Table 4. This number has decreased throughout the years. The annual number of persons eligible for Old Age Pension is presented in Table 5; the number has remained virtually constant.

Tables 5a and 5b give the number of persons eligible for free medical services from the Government for the poor. Gender-specific data were only available for 1994.

Table 6 gives the number of persons eligible for financial aid annually. Only 1 person per family is eligible for financial aid, while more than one person may be eligible per household. The majority of those registered for financial aid is female. The amount of the benefits has been

[2] Core Document Forming Part of the Report of States Parties. Suriname, February 1998
[3] Draft National Report Convention on the Rights of the Child, April, 1996

adjusted throughout the years, though not substantially. A recent report of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) indicates that 60% of the Surinamese population lives below the poverty line and that there are few possibilities of breaking out of the circle of poverty (UNDP, 1999).

Economic Data

There are hardly any recent reliable economic data available for Suriname. Calculations by the General Bureau of Statistics were still based on the 'official' exchange rate of US$ 1 = Sf 8, while the exchange rate on the black market had risen to over US$ 1 = Sf 480 by the end of 1994. By March 1995 it was Sf 750, by the end of 1995 it was back down to Sf 491, while by May 1999 the exchange rate had risen above Sf 1000.

Natural Resources

Suriname has the following natural resources: timber, hydroelectric potential, fish, shrimp, bauxite, iron ore and small amounts of nickel, copper, platinum, gold.
The most import export products are:

- alumina, aluminium, unrefined petroleum and crude oil;
- rice;
- bananas and vegetables;
- shrimp, fish and fish products;
- timber and timber products.

Political Structure

In 1667, Suriname became a colony of the Kingdom of the Netherlands. In 1866 a people's representation was introduced, and Universal Suffrage for men and women followed in 1948. The first political parties were formed shortly after the First World War, while the first elections were held in 1949. In 1954, Suriname was granted autonomy within the Kingdom of the Netherlands, and on 25 November, 1975, the country gained independence. Before and after independence as well, Surinamese politics were dominated by a large number of coalition parties, often founded on an ethnic basis. On 25 February, 1980, there was a military coup d'etat, and the military retained power until 1987. After the May 1987 general elections, a civilian government once more took power, until a second military coup occurred on 24 Decernber, 1990. General elections were held in May of 1991 and 1996.

The current Surinamese Constitution, which was drafted during the military period and which was adopted by referendum in 1987, has 180 Articles. In 1992 the Constitution was amended. According to this Constitution, Suriname is a democratic state, based on the principle of sovereignty of the people and respect for and guarantees of fundamental rights and freedoms.

The President is the highest authority of the Republic of Suriname, Head of Government, Chairman of the State Council, Chairman of the Security Council, and Commander-in-Chief of the army. In his absence, the Vice-President, who is Chairman of the Council of Ministers, deputizes for the President. During the period 1975 – 1987, the President of the Court of Justice acted on behalf of the President and Vice-President in their absence, but since 1987, the Vice-President is the only person who can deputise for the President. The President and Vice-President are elected for a period of 5 years and are accountable to the National Assembly.

The National Assembly and the Government hold legislative power. The National Assembly consists of 51 members. This representative body is chosen on the basis of general and free

elections for a period of 5 years (proportional representation). The National Assembly is responsible for approving the socio-economic and political policy of the Government.

The President holds executive powers. The Government consists of the President, Vice-President and the Council of Ministers. The Government determines policy and can be called to account by the National Assembly. The Council of Ministers consists of Ministers and is the highest executive and administrative government body.

The judiciary consists of:

- the President and Vice-President of the Court of Justice;
- the Members of the Court of Justice;
- the Deputy Members of the Court of Justice;
- the other members of the Public Prosecutions Department
- the judicial officers appointed by the Law.

Table 1: Overview of Surface Areas per District, Number of Administrative Jurisdictions, and Population Distribution in the Various Districts in 1997

District	Surface Area in km²	Number of Administr. Jurisdictions	Male Population 1997	Female Population 1997	Total Population Dec. 1997
Paramaribo	182	12	113,972	114,972	228,859
Wanica	443	7	38,033	36,250	74,283
Nickerie	5,353	5	17,845	16,472	34,317
Coronie	3,902	3	1,645	1,396	3,041
Saramacca	3,636	6	7,070	6,397	13,466
Para	5,393	5	7,754	7,015	14,770
Commewijne	2,353	6	11,090	10,196	21,286
Marowijne	4,627	6	6,685	6,347	13,032
Brokopondo	7,364	6	3,456	3,929	7,385
Sipaliwini	130,567	6	10,154	13,738	23,892
Total	163,820	62	217,704 (50.1)	216,627 (49.9)	434,331 (100,0)

Source: Central Civil Registry Office, *Suriname Demographic Data, 1972-1997*

Table 2: Gender-Specific Age Distribution of Surinamese Population, 1993-1995

Age Group	1993			1994			1995		
	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total
0-4 yrs.	23423	22863	46286	22845	22287	45132	22422	21864	44286
5-9 yrs.	23586	23158	46744	23477	23066	46543	23435	23032	46467
10-14 yrs.	21428	21038	42466	21712	21341	43053	22081	21742	43823
15-19 yrs.	20632	398873	40505	20015	19302	39317	19816	19151	388967
20-24 yrs.	21579	20439	42018	21170	19952	41122	20757	19491	40248
25-29 yrs.	21099	20052	41151	20711	19586	40297	20483	19257	39740
30-34 yrs.	17809	17299	35108	18872	17143	37015	19674	18759	38433
35-39 yrs.	15544	11757	23301	12280	12392	24672	13274	13242	26516
40-44 yrs.	88492	8822	17314	8863	9159	18022	9351	9602	18953
45-49 yrs.	6893	7458	13315	6253	7009	13262	7284	7028	13312
50-54 yrs.	6289	8026	13315	6253	77009	13262	6284	7028	13312
55-59 yrs.	5993	6449	12442	5934	6437	12371	5922	6472	12394
60-64 yrs.	5066	5377	10443	5192	5544	10736	5307	5701	11008
65-69 yrs.	3627	3954	7581	3712	4052	7764	3854	4213	8067
70-74 yrs.	2401	2769	5170	2525	2919	5444	2645	3061	5706
75-79 yrs.	1210	1392	2602	1248	1475	2723	1369	1649	3018
80 and up	1410	1614	3024	1431	1610	3041	1464	1615	3079
Total	2024815 50.1%	201340 49.9%	40382110 100%	203263 50.2%	201750 49.8%	405013 100%	205380 50.2%	203486 49.8%	408866 100%

Source: General Bureau of Statistics, 1999

Table 3: Population According to Ethnic Group and District (1980)

District	Creole	Hindu-Stani	Javanese	Amer-indian	Chinese	European	Maroon	Tribal Amer-indian	Others	Total
Paramaribo	39799	14489	8538	1148	2690	436	10	-	895	68005
Suriname	63193	71820	24510	1878	2157	914	463	473	1247	66655
Nickerie	5453	20604	5971	138	146	46	13	1831	295	34497
Coronie	2401	51	294	0	20	4	-	-	9	2779
Para	6384	1487	5499	1001	166	59	145	8	141	14890
Commewijne	1346	4625	7854	122	59	24	234	29	62	14355
Saramacca	695	5230	2470	92	43	32	212	1464	110	10348
Marowijne	3330	431	2768	265	200	29	13901	2368	151	22443
Brokopondo	684	246	100	24	13	14	18933	180	74	20268
Total	123285 (34.7%)	118983 (33.5%)	58004 (16.3%)	4668 (1.3%)	5494 (1.5%)	1558 (0.4%)	33911 (9.5%)	6353 (1.8%)	2984 (0.8%)	355240 (100%)

Notes:
1. 'others' includes 'unknown'
2. no distinction is made for tribal Maroons.

Source: Census 1980, General Bureau of Statistics

Table 4: Number of Children for whom the Government Pays General Family Allowance Annually, per District (1993-1997)

District	1993 (%)	1994 (%)	1995 (%)	1996 (%)	1997 (%)
Paramaribo	25342 (39.6)	22220 (37.8)	21051 (37.8)	19515 (37.9)	17632 (37.6)
Wanica	10503 (16.4)	10166 (17.3)	9806 (17.6)	9114 (17.7)	8475 (18.1)
Nickerie	6717 (10.5)	6144 (10.5)	5712 (10.3)	5213 (10.1)	4790 (10.2)
Coronie	437 (0.7)	393 (0.7)	365 (0.7)	344 (0.7)	269 (0.6)
Saramacca	1845 (2.9)	1751 (3.0)	1681 (3.0)	1538 (3.0)	1390 (3.0)
Para	3847 (6.0)	3571 (6.1)	3392 (6.1)	3190 (6.2)	2877 (6.1)
Commewijne	3544 (5.5)	3472 (5.9)	2925 (5.3)	2675 (5.2)	2407 (5.1)
Marowijne	1877 (2.9)	1866 (3.2)	1814 (3.3)	1726 (3.4)	1621 (3.5)
Brokopondo	2213 (3.5)	1900 (3.2)	1777 (3.2)	1588 (3.1)	1422 (3.1)
Sipaliwini	7676 (12.0)	7259 (12.3)	7138 (12.8)	6537 (12.7)	5958 (12.7)
Totaal	64001 (100.0)	58742 (100.0)	55661 (100.0)	51440 (100.0)	46841 (100.0)

Source: *Statistical Yearbook 1997*

Table 5: Number of Persons Eligible for Old Age Pension, Gender-Specific per District (1993-1995)

District	1993			1994		
	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total
Paramaribo	7446	8625	16071	7649	8855	16504
Wanica	2102	2008	4110	2176	2144	4320
Nickerie	1271	1170	2441	1303	1229	2532
Coronie	237	239	476	218	227	445
Saramacca	531	511	1042	553	527	1080
Commewijne	963	901	1864	972	935	1907
Marowijne	592	615	1207	566	575	1141
Para	620	575	1195	642	585	1227
Brokopondo	267	358	625	246	322	508
Sipaliwini	1214	1749	2963	1226	1759	2985
Totaal	15243	16751	31994	15551	17158	32709
%	47.6 %	52.4 %	100 %	47.5 %	52.5 %	100 %

Table 5, continued

District	1995		
	Men	Women	Total
Paramaribo	7574	8954	16528
Wanica	2183	2175	4358
Nickerie	1328	1275	2603
Coronie	216	217	433
Saramacca	568	537	1105
Commewijne	1006	978	1984
Marowijne	568	598	1166
Para	649	591	1240
Brokopondo	245	327	572
Sipaliwini	1241	1761	3002
Total	15578	17413	32991
%	47.2 %	52.8 %	100 %

Source: Ministry of Social Affairs, Department of Research and Planning, 1999

Table 5a: Free Medical Services per District 1993-1997

District	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997
Paramaribo	14200 (43.9)	13817 (44.3)	20240 (44.7)	25230 (48.7)	28266 (50.6)
Wanica	6316 (19.5)	6371 (20.4)	10791 (23.9)	11916 (23.0)	12599 (22.5)
Nickerie	4500 (13.9)	4275 (13.7)	5743 (12.7)	5525 (10.7)	5316 (9.5)
Coronie	376 (1.2)	323 (1.0)	553 (1.2)	658 (1.3)	645 (1.6)
Saramacca	1517 (4.7)	1506 (4.8)	2096 (4.6)	2485 (4.8)	2886 (5.2)
Commewijne	1882 (5.8)	2026 (6.5)	2317 (5.1)	2612 (5.0)	2557 (4.6)
Marowijne	1703 (5.3)	1586 (5.1)	1545 (3.4)	1553 (3.0)	1774 (3.2)
Para	1244 (3.8)	1326 (4.2)	1445 (3.2)	1483 (2.9)	1586 (2.8)
Brokopondo	634 (1.9)	.	456 (1.0)	323 (0.6)	253 (0.5)
Total	32372 (100.0)	31224 (100.0)	45231 (100.0)	51785 (100.0)	55882 (100.0)

Source: *Statistical Yearbook 1997*

Table 5b: Free Medical Services according to Status, Marital State and Sex 1994

Civil Status	Indigent			Disadvantaged			Total		
	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total
Not married	2641	7653	10294	1383	3743	5126	4024	11396	15420
Married	1872	1144	3016	5038	1827	6865	6910	2971	9881
Widowed	397	2325	2722	61	342	403	458	2667	3125
Divorced	165	670	835	159	345	504	324	1015	1339
Cohabitation	167	337	504	356	535	891	523	872	1395
Unknown	7	20	27	14	23	37	21	43	64
Total	5249	12149	17398	7011	6815	13826	12260	18964	31224
%	30.2%	69.8%	100%	50.7%	49.3%	100%	39.3%	60.7%	100%

Source: Ministry of Social Affairs, Department of Research and Planning, 1999

Table 6: Number of Persons Receiving Financial Aid per District (1993-1997)

District	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997
Paramaribo	3144 (44.5)	2945 (43.2)	2704 (42.4)	3178 (44.2)	2772 (43.3)
Wanica	1078 (15.2)	1083 (15.9)	1031 (16.2)	1204 (16.7)	1152 (18.0)
Nickerie	886 (12.5)	790 (11.6)	892 (14.0)	874 (12.2)	847 (13.2)
Coronie	109 (1.5)	87 (1.3)	99 (1.6)	117 (1.6)	111 (1.7)
Saramacca	434 (6.1)	409 (6.0)	383 (6.0)	385 (5.4)	331 (5.2)
Commewijne	350 (4.9)	389 (5.7)	437 (6.9)	462 (6.4)	404 (6.3)
Marowijne	860 (12.2)	891 (13.1)	609 (9.6)	690 (9.6)	515 (8.0)
Para	211 (3.1)	216 (3.2)	215 (3.4)	279 (3.9)	267 (4.2)
Total	7072 (100.0)	6810 (100.0)	6370 (100.0)	7189 (100.0)	6399 (100.0)

Source: *Statistical Yearbook 1997*

Table 7: Economic Data for Suriname, 1994-1997

Economic Data		
	1994	1995
Average per Capita Income in Sf *)	139,510	504,420
Total Exports **)	Sf.62,379,408,267	Sf.214,238,898,393
Total Imports **)	Sf.59,609,507,455	Sf.258,916,718,043
Inflation in % (Paramaribo + Wanica)	368.5	235.6
Av. NFL Exchange Rate (Black Market)***)	142.5	302.3

Table 7, continued

Economic Data	Year		
	1996	1997	1998
Ave. per Capita Income in SFL	667,209	734,454	873,637
Total Exports	USD 434,418,932	USD 702,823,388	USD 438,200,623
Total Imports	USD 502,180,601	USD 660,011,194	USD 578,986,526
Inflation in % (Paramaribo + Wanica)	-0.7	7.1	19.0
Ave. NFL Exchange Rate (Black Market)	224.6	228.8	375.5

Note: The figures on average per capita income for 1997 and 1998 are preliminary figures.
Sources:
* General Bureau of Statistics / Department of Research and Planning / National Accounts Section, July 1999
** General Bureau of Statistics, Consumer Price Indices Section, 18 October 1999
*** 1998 Annual Report, De Surinaamsche Bank

PART I

Definition of Discrimination Against Women

Article 1

For the purposes of the present Convention, the term "discrimination against women" shall mean any distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of sex which has the effect or purpose of impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment or exercise by women irrespective of their marital status, on a basis of equality of men and women, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field.

A definition of the concept of discrimination has been laid down in Article 126 bis* of the Penal Code. This definition is as follows:
"Discrimination is understood to be every form of differentiation, every exclusion, limitation or preference, the purpose or result of which may be that the acknowledgement, the enjoyment, or the assertion, on terms of equality, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in political, economic, social or cultural areas or in other areas of public life, is cancelled or impaired."
The above definition does not specifically refer to women, but to human beings in general. However, the Constitution of the Republic of Suriname contains a specific provision with regard to discrimination on the basis of gender. This will be examined in more detail in the following Article.

The Constitution of the Republic of Suriname (Bulletn of Acts and Decrees 1987 No. 116, as amended by Bulletin 1992 No. 38), the highest national law, generally prohibits discrimination, thus discrimination on the basis of gender is also prohibited. Article 8 Paragraph 2 of the Constitution states: "No-one may be discriminated on the basis of his or her birth, gender, race, language, religion, descent, education, political beliefs, economic position or social circumstances, or any other status."
The principle of equality of men and women is furthermore also incorporated in the Constitution (Article 35 Paragraph 2): "Men and women shall be equal before the law".

On the grounds of what is laid down in the Constitution, women are equal to men in all respects, and hence, there should not be any discrimination against women, neither in public life nor in private life.

Appropriate Measures

Article 2

States Parties condemn discrimination against women in all its forms, agree to pursue by all appropriate means and without delay a policy of eliminating discrimination against women and, to this end, undertake:

Article 2, sub a

(a) To embody the principle of the equality of men and women in their national constitutions or other appropriate legislation if not yet incorporated therein and to ensure, through law and other appropriate means, the practical realization of this principle

In spite of the principle of equality of men and women and the constitutional prohibition of discrimination, there are legal provisions in the national legislation which are in conflict with these principles.

- The Personnel Act, Articles 15a, 45, 47 and 69 (G.B. 1962 No. 195, as amended in Bulletin of Acts and Decrees 1987, No. 93)
- The State Decree with regard to the implementation of the Identity Act, Appendix I (Bulletin of Acts and Decrees 1976 No. 10)
- The Law on Nationality and Residence, Articles 3, 8 Paragraphs 3 and 6; 10 and 12 through 15 (Bulletin of Acts and Decrees 1975 No. 4, as amended inBulletin 1989 No. 29)
- The Civil Code, Article 383a Subparagraph 3 (Bulletin of Acts and Decrees 1960, as amended in Bulletin 1983 No. 117)
- The Accident Regulation, Article 6 Paragraph 3 (Bulletin of Acts and Decrees1947 No. 145, as amended in Bulletin 1983 No. 8)
- The Holiday Act, Article 8 Paragraph 2 (Bulletin of Acts and Decrees1975 No. 164c)
- The Travel and Temporary Attachment Decree, Article 4 (Bulletin of Acts and Decrees 1944 No. 84, as amended in Bulletin 1993 No. 8)
- The Elections Act (Bulletin of Acts and Decrees 1987 No. 70, as amended in Bulletin 1987 No. 84)
- The Commercial Registers Act, Article 5 (Bulletin of Acts and Decrees 1936 No. 149, as amended in Bulletin 1962 No. 84)

There are also provisions which have force of law, but are no longer implemented, such as in the Personnel Act. These provisions will be raised in the relevant Articles of the Convention. The inconsistency of subordinate laws and the Constitution and CEDAW can be explained by the fact that the two latter are of a more recent date.

Article 2, sub b

(b) To adopt appropriate legislative and other measures, including sanctions where appropriate, prohibiting all discrimination against women;

A general prohibition of discrimination is included in the Constitution, which also covers discrimination based on gender. However, no sanctions have been instituted with regard to this prohibition. Furthermore, discrimination is prohibited by the Penal Code in Articles 175, 175 bis, 176 Paragraph 1, 500 bis and 500 ter, (Bulletin of Acts and Decrees 1911 No. 1, as amended in Bulletin 1993 No. 35). These provisions do not refer to discrimination based on gender, but to discrimination based on race, religion or conviction.

In 1993, an amendment of the Penal Code was drafted with the purpose of making discrimination on the basis of gender an offense; this draft was reconciled with Articles 175, 175 bis, 176 Paragraph 1, 500 bis and 500 ter of the Penal Code. By adding the concept of 'gender' to these Articles, a prohibition of discrimination on the basis of gender was created.

The Council of Ministers adopted this draft in April 1993. In May 1993, the Minister of Justice and Police submitted the draft to the State Council for advice, but to date no opinion has been given.

Article 2, sub c

(c) To establish legal protection of the rights of women on an equal basis with men and to ensure through competent national tribunals and other public institutions the effective protection of women against any act of discrimination

The law does not provide for a special institution for women, to which they can turn for protection in case of discrimination on the basis of gender. A National Gender Bureau is at present established in the Ministry of Home Affairs, which is responsible for the formulation and execution of a government policy on gender. In this policy, the stimulation and protection of women's rights are given attention. There are some 50 different nation-wide non-Governmental women's organizations (NGOs), volunteer and professional organizations, which work for women's rights and interests.

A National Institute for the promotion and protection of fundamental human rights and obligations in general was founded by Decree A-18 of 10 January, 1985 (S.B. 1985 No. 1). This Institute has an advisory role and has the authority to investigate complaints with regard to violations of human rights. Anyone who consider himself or herself a victim of a violation of fundamental rights and freedoms may submit complaints. Decisions of the National Institute can be appealed with the Court of Justice. However, the Institute has not functioned since 1995.

A woman who is discriminated on the basis of gender has the option of the regular court *in last instance*. The Constitution stipulates that in case of a violation of rights and freedoms, everyone has the right to a fair and public hearing of the complaint within a reasonable period of time by an independent and impartial judge (Article 10).
Because of the backlog of cases to be heard, these cases cannot be expected to be handled within a reasonable period of time. The backlog is caused in part by a shortage of staff and materials.

Article 2, sub d

(d) To refrain from engaging in any act or practice of discrimination against women and to ensure that public authorities and institutions shall act in conformity with this obligation

Article 2, sub e

(e) To take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women by any person, organization or enterprise

The assessment of Articles 2 (d) and 2 (e) is discussed in the other Articles.

Article 2, sub f

(f) To take all appropriate measures, including legislation, to modify or abolish existing laws, regulations, customs and practices which constitute discrimination against women

Legal adjustments have been made in the course of time to eliminate discrimination of women, namely in the Civil Code, the Wages and Salaries Tax Act (Bulletin of Acts and Decrees 1981 No. 181, as amended in Bulletin 1995 No. 51), the General Police Regulation (Decree of the Minister of Justice and Police of 25 November, 1972, No. 9438, amended by Decree of 4 August, 1995, No. 3202), the Civil Servants' Pension Act (Bulletin of Acts and Decrees 1972 No. 150, as amended in Bulletin 1987 No. 81). The legal measures will be discussed under the relevant CEDAW Articles.

Article 2, sub g

(g) To repeal all national penal provisions which constitute discrimination against women.

The Penal Act of the Police contains provisions that imply discrimination of women. Reference is made to Articles 65 and 66, which penalize women for prostitution. Men who engage in prostitution, are not penalized by this Penal Act. In practice, men as well as women are arrested and fined.

Human Rights

Article 3

States Parties shall take in all fields, in particular in the political, social, economic and cultural fields, all appropriate measures, including legislation, to ensure the full development and advancement of women, for the purpose of guaranteeing them the exercise and enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms on a basis of equality with men.

The law provides equal access of men and women to political and economic development and to social provisions, healthcare and education. However, owing to deep-rooted gender socialization patterns, such access is restricted.

Suriname is party to the following human rights treaties:

1. Inter-American Convention on Political Rights for Women (Bogotá, 2 May, 1948; R 10-2-1982)
2. Inter-American Convention on Civil Rights for Women (Bogotá, 2 May, 1948; R 10-2-1982)
3. Inter-American Treaty on Human Rights (Pact of San José / Costa Rica, 22 November, 1969; T 12-11-1987)
4. Inter-American Treaty on the Elimination and Punishment of Torture (Cartagena de Indias, Colombia, 9 December, 1985; R 12-11-1987)
5. Additional Protocol of the American Convention on Human Rights in the Area of Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (Protocol of San Salvador, El Salvador, 17 November, 1988; T 10-7-1990)
6. Convention Against All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (U.N. G.A.18-12-1979)
7. Convention on the Rights of the Child (G.A. U.N. 20-11-1989)
8. International Treaty on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (N.Y. 19-12-1966; Γ 28-12-1976)
9. International Treaty on Civil and Political Rights, with Optional Protocol (N.Y. 16-12-1966)
10. International Treaty on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (N.Y. 7-3-1966; O 15-3-1984)

11. International Treaty on Surpression and Penalization of the Crime of Apartheid (U.N. G.A. 30-11-1973; T 3-6-1980)
12. Convention on Slavery (Geneva, 25 September, 1926; O 12-10-1979)
13. Supplementary Convention on the Abolition of Slavery, Slave Trade and Institutions and Practices Equal to Slavery (Geneva, 7 September, 1956; O 12-10-1979)
14. Convention on the Status of Refugees (Geneva, 28 June, 1951; O 29-11-1978)
15. Protocol on the Status of Refugees (NY 13-1-1967; O 29-11-1978)
16. Geveva Convention on the Improvement of the Condition of the Wounded and Sick of Armed Forces on the Battle Field (12 August, 1949; O 13-10-1976)
17. Geneva Convention on the Improvement of the Condition of Wounded, Sick and Shipwrecked of Naval Forces (12 August, 1949; O 13-10-1976)
18. Geneva Convention on the Treatment of Prisoners of War (12 August, 1949; O 13-10-1976)
19. Geneva Convention on the Protection of Civilians in Wartime (12 August, 1949; O 13-10-1976)

Suriname has also signed the following Conventions of the International Labour Organization (ILO) on human rights:

- ILO Convention no. 29 on Forced or Compulsory Labour; T. 15-6-1976
- ILO Convention no. 87 on Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organize; O 15-6-1976
- ILO Convention no. 105 on the Abolition of Forced Labour;) 15-6-1976
- ILO Convention no. 135 on Protection and Facilities to be Afforded to Workers' Representatives in the Undertaking; O 15-6-1976
- ILO Convention no. 155 on Occupational Safety and Health in the Working Environment

In view of the fact that Suriname is party to the above-mentioned treaties and conventions, no actions may be undertaken in violation thereof. Furthermore, the preamble to the Constitution is based on respect for and guaranteeing the principles of freedom, equality and democracy as well as the fundamental human rights and freedoms. This point of departure is also apparent in provisions of the Constitution, for these fundamental rights apply to all.

In April 1999, the President of the Republic of Suriname installed a Government Committee to monitor the reports on the various international treaties ratified by Suriname. The Committee is currently engaged in the report on the International Treaty on Civil and Political Rights.

Positive Discrimination

Article 4, Paragraph 1

Adoption by States Parties of temporary special measures aimed at accelerating de facto equality between men and women shall not be considered discrimination as defined in the present Convention, but shall in no way entail as a consequence the maintenance of unequal or separate standards; these measures shall be discontinued when the objectives of equality of opportunity and treatment have been achieved.

No special measures have been taken, aimed at accelerating *de facto* equality of men and women. Nor are there any policy measures with regard thereto.

Article 4, Paragraph 2

Adoption by States Parties of special measures, including those measures contained in the present Convention, aimed at protecting maternity shall not be considered discriminatory.

The Constitution (Article 35 Paragraphs 5 and 6) recognizes the exceptional value of motherhood, and lays down that working mothers have the right to paid maternity leave. The Constitution (Articles 29 (b) furthermore prescribes that during and after pregnancy special protection must be given at work to women who are involved in activities requiring strenuous effort or who work in unhealthy or hazardous circumstances.

Elimination of Stereotyping and Prejudice

Article 5

States Parties shall take all appropriate measures:

(a) To modify the social and cultural patterns of conduct of men and women, with a view to achieving the elimination of prejudices and customary and all other practices which are based on the idea of the inferiority or the superiority of either of the sexes or on stereotyped roles for men and women;

Pursuant to Article 38 of the Constitution, everyone has the right to education and enjoyment of culture. In practice, prevailing gender and cultural patterns cause the reproductive and social roles and tasks of women to acquire greater emphasis, whilst productive and political roles are ascribed more to men. This causes impediments for women's progress in those areas that have to do with productive and political responsibilities and tasks. There are currently no data available to illustrate the role and task division in general or per ethnic group.
The right to enjoyment of one's culture is especially important in a society such as the Surinamese, which is characterized by a multi-ethnic and multi-cultural composition of the population. Women and women's groups have indicated that some cultural traditions are in contravention with the fundamental rights and freedoms of women, as indicated in this Article. Since no data with regard to this have so far been collected, the present report is unable to go more deeply into this matter.

(b) To ensure that family education includes a proper understanding of maternity as a social function and the recognition of the common responsibility of men and women in the upbringing and development of their children, it being understood that the interest of the children is the primordial consideration in all cases.

The Ministry of Education initiated two projects aimed at breaking the (traditional) ideas of the roles of men and women, namely: the Curriculum Development Project for Elementary Education (1998) and the Basic Life Skills Education Program (1996).
These projects will be discussed in more detail under Article 10(e).

Trade in Women and Prostitution

Article 6

States Parties shall take all appropriate measures, including legislation, to suppress all forms of traffic in women and exploitation of prostitution of women.

Trade in women is an offense in Suriname. Trade in women is a crime against public decency, and is regulated in Article 307 of the Penal Code (Bulletin of Acts and Decrees 1911 No. 1, as amended inBulletin 1993 No. 35). The penalty provided for this crime is a maximum five-year imprisonment. However, the Penal Code does not define the concept of trade in women. Despite the fact that there is no visible traffic in women in Suriname, relevant authorities and women's organizations believe that it does occur, particularly among foreign sex workers, who are employed under false pretexts. Traffic in women is a crime, but the furnishing of proof is encumbered by the lack of a legal definition of the concept. No analyses of traffic in women and pimping can be performed as yet, for insufficient systematically collected qualitative and quantitative data are available.

Pimping is also a punishable act. It is an offence laid down in Article 503 (3) of the Penal Code. The penalty is a maximum jail sentence of six weeks. Pimping occurs with street prostitutes, intended as a source of income in exchange for against clients. In practice, however, sex workers are victims of physical violence, abuse and intimidation by pimps as well as clients[4].

As far as prostitution is concerned, the following applies. Prostitution is punishable, although only women who are guilty of prostitution are punishable, despite the fact that there are also male sex workers. In practice, however, male prostitutes are also arrested and fined. The offense is laid down in Articles 65 and 66 of the Penal Law of the Police (Bulletin of Acts and Decrees 1915 No. 77 as amended in Bulletin 1990 No. 24) and legal action can only be taken in case of a complaint. Persons who employ the women, such as nightclub owners, could be punished on the basis of Article 503 of the Penal Code (for pimping).

There are two types of commercial sex work, in the street and in clubs/hotels. The street workers are mainly Surinamese women and illegal residents from neighbouring Guyana. The roughly 45 nightclubs employ mainly foreign sex workers. Reliable figures on sex workers, men as well as women, are still lacking. According to the Maxi Linder organization, medical authorities and the police, the number of registered female sex workers is considered a fraction of the real number, since certain categories of sex workers are not visible at large, such as those who work at home or in boarding houses and hotels, or incidental street workers, in particular youngsters[5]. There is a noticable increase in the number of Surinamese and foreign sex workers and in the number of unofficial locations. As a result of the strongly deteriorating economic situation, increasing numbers of women earn an additional income as sex workers, either full-time or part-time, at home and/or in the street. The increase in the number of sex workers is caused in part by the increased demand from the gold industry in the Surinamese interior, dominated by foreign prospectors. Mainly foreign women are involved in the sex industry in the interior, and also an increasing number of Maroon women from Paramaribo and the interior[6].

The Government has no official policy with regard to commercial sex. There is a so-called 'policy of toleration' with regard to foreign sex workers in Suriname. Agreements have been reached with the immigration authorities (Ministry of Justice and Police) as regards registration , as well as regards medical control. The sex workers are provided with three-month work permits. They are required to have periodical – bi-weekly – STD-checks at the Dermatological Service of the Ministry of Health.

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[4] Antonius 1998, p. 65

[5] *Stichting Maxi Linder*, a non-governmental organization working with~~aimed at~~ commercial sex workers, registered 248 female street sex workers in 1998. (*Stichting Maxi Linder*, 1999)

[6] Kemapadoo 1998; *Stichting Maxi Linder* 1999

The non-governmental organization Maxi Linder was founded in 1994 with the purpose of optimizing the socio-economic life and health of female commercial sex workers, increasing awareness, mutual solidarity, and protection against violence and abuse. The organization's activities consist of health education, particularly about STD/HIV, general and personal hygiene, social and legal advice, distribution of condoms (free of charge), and providing facilities for cervical cancer examinations and for HIV pre- and post-tests counseling, negotiation techniques on sexuality and condom use. Alternative income-generating projects are also set up. Despite the fact that the Government has no official policy with regard to sex work, it subsidises this NGO by making staff available. This organizationalso has functional relationships with different relevant Government agencies.

PART II

Political and Public Life

Article 7

States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in the political and public life of the country and, in particular, shall ensure to women, on equal terms with men, the right:

Article 7, sub a

(a) To vote in all elections and public referenda and to be eligible for election to all publicly elected bodies;

Pursuant to Article 52, Paragraph 2 of the Constitution, women in Suriname are entitled to vote and stand for election, as Suriname's general elections are open to men and women. In 1948, general suffrage for men and women was introduced in Suriname, for which the voting age was fixed at 25 years. In 1987 the voting age was lowered to 18 years.

Pursuant to Article 52, Paragraph 2, and Article 53 of the Constitution, women as well as men can participate in the general, free and secret elections for the bodies of popular representation. Suriname has three bodies of popular representation, namely the National Assembly, the District Councils and the Local Councils.
The two latter are regional legislative bodies, created after the amendment of the Constitution in 1987. The members of these bodies are elected in general elections in the relevant districts or ressorts.

Contrary to the Constitution, the Election Regulations contain discriminatory provisions. A married woman who is a candidate must be mentioned on the list of candidates under her husband's or deceased husband's name (Articles 41, 57 and 73). A similar provision governs the registration of women on the list of eligible political parties (Article 15).
The requirements for electing legislative bodiesw (National Assembly, Local Councils, District Councils) are not gender discriminatory (Article 57 of the Constitution, Articles 3 and 17 of the Regional Bodies Act, Bulletin of Acts and Decrees 1989 No. 44), nor are women considered among the groups excluded from participation in virtue of Article 58 of the Constitution and Article 6 of the Election Regulations. These requirements refer to age, nationality and place of residence. To be able to elect a member of the National Assembly, one must be a resident, have the Surinamese nationality, and have reached the age of 18 (Article 57of the Constitution, Article 1 of the Election Regulations). To be able to elect a member of a Local Council, one must not only meet the requirements of age and Surinamese nationality, but one's main or actual place of residence must lie in the relevant administrative jurisdiction of the district (Article 4 of the Election Regulations). The right to stand for election is not based on gender either (Articles 59, 61 Paragraph 2, and 163 of the Constitution).
Table 7.1 gives the distribution of voters according to gender and place of residence. This overview shows that the male-female ratio is roughly equal, namely 50%.

No provisions were found in the Decree on Political Organizations (Bulletin of Acts and Decrees 1987 No. 61), which directly impede or restrict the entry of women into politics. Article 2 (c) of this law states that the by-laws of a political party should state, among other things, that the party must be open to everyone, irrespective of race and religious conviction. The factor of "gender" is

not explicitly mentioned in this Article. Explicitely adding "gender" in the relevant provision is recommended. The fact that legislation forms no impediment, does not guarantee proportional representation of women. Women are hardly visibly in the leadership of political parties. In 1996, only 12% of the committee members of the political parties in Government were women (see Table 7.2). Only one party - in the opposition - has a relatively high proportion of women in its main governing body, namely 44%. No female chairpersons were identified among the political parties during the reporting period.

There is a small number of women in the main governing bodies of political parties, but women are mainly seen in supporting structures, such as administrative personnel, propogandists, and performing odd jobs during party activities and on election day. Contrary to the low participation of women in the leadership of political parties, it is assumed that the number of female members is generally relatively high, based on the visibility of women (Lewis 1997). Because the registration of members of political parties is inadequate, it is impossible to provide data on the proportion of female party members. Four of the 14 active political parties have a specific women's branch within the party structures. In Surinamese history there has been only one political party explicitly for women, namely *Surinaams Vrouwen Front* (Surinamese Women's Front), which was founded in 1973 and has since been disbanded.

Article 7, sub b

(b) To participate in the formulation of government policy and the implementation thereof and to hold public office and perform all public functions at all levels of government;

Representative Bodies and Government

In the Surinamese electoral system, women have the possibility of participating in the determination and execution of government policy. Furthermore, the law allows women to hold any public office and function at all levels of government. Examples: the Speaker of the National Assembly – the highest public body – is a woman, as is the deputy Chairperson of the State Council. Furthermore, there are six female Members of the National Assembly, one female Minister, one female Deputy Minister, three female Permanent Secretaries, as well as a number of Deputy Directors. The number of women in these functions is still low, however.
Table 7.3 shows this minimal participation of women in popular representation in subsequent terms, starting from 1973.

In 1991, a woman was elected as deputy Speaker of the National Assembly for the first time in Surinamese history, and in 1996 the first female Speaker was elected. The 1991 elections were also remarkable in another respect, as a female candidate who was not nominated on a so-called "safe seat" on the list of candidates of her party, was elected to the National Assembly on the basis of preferential votes. During the parliamentary elections in May 1996, the Women's Parliament Forum (VPF), a women's organization, strove to increase the participation of women in the elections, through a mobilization campaign. Compared to previous elections, the results of these elections show an increase of the number of female members of parliament from 3 (6%) to 7 (16%).

The Government is composed of the President, Vice-President and the Council of Ministers. From its independence in 1975 to present reporting period, Suriname has had 12 Governments, with a total of only 4 female Ministers and 3 female Deputy Ministers. The first female Minister and two Deputy Ministers were appointed in 1980. Suriname had no specific Minister or Deputy Minister for Gender Policy. The Minister of Home Affairs has been responsible for gender policy since 1995.

Table 7.4 presents an overview of the political administrative bodies according to gender. It is remarkable that the increase of participation of women in 1996 is not spectacular compared to 1988. With regard to the participation of women in High State Bodies, one may also conclude that women are under-represented (Table 7.5).

The low participation of women in Government and legislative bodies is ascribed to the following factors, which are derived from a study of the political participation of women in Suriname, carried out in 1996 (Lewis 1997), and from consultations for the CEDAW evaluation (April 1999):

a. Political parties are of the opinion that the main restrictive factor is the unwillingness of women to participate.
b. According to women in political parties, the main impediments are that men are not willing to relinquish positions they have attained within the State Bodies to a woman, and party structures (mainly men) are not willing to nominate women.
c. Furthermore, women believe that they do not receive enough encouragement within their own circle (party and personal networks) to nominate themselves, because of responsibilities related to motherhood.
d. Psychological and cultural factors are also obstacles:
   - Women hesitate and are not sufficiently motivated to undertake public and political functions.
   - Women view politics very negatively ("Politics are dirty").
   - Public life is considered a man's world.
   - Political propaganda via the media and otherwise is costly and women generally have insufficient options and funds for sponsoring.

In a nutshell, the traditional female role patterns are the most important obstacles.
Further qualitative studies on the conditions underlying the limited political participation of women need to be carried out.

Civil Service

The percentage of women in civil service was roughly 35% in 1994. The lowest percentage is found among the higher positions (17%), while the percentage of women at the lowest level is about 39%. The figures for the years after 1994 are unreliable. The total number of women enrolled in a civil servants' training in 1997/1998 was 273 (90%), and 213 (91%) in 1998/1999 (Ministry of Home Affairs 1999).

The first female Permanent Secretary of a Ministry was appointed in 1991. At the end of the present reporting period, there were 4 female Permanent Secretaries (Regional Development; Health; Natural Resources; and Transport, Communication and Tourism). Within the Ministries more women are being appointed as Heads of Departments and as Deputy Directors.

At the administrative level, Suriname is subdivided into 10 Districts, headed by District Commissioners, assisted by District Secretaries and Deputy District Secretaries. The first female District Commissioner was appointed in 1981, while the secodnd was appointed in 1998.
The percentage of women in regional government service increased from 14% in 1994 to 21% in 1998 (see also Table 7.6).

The Judiciary

The Judiciary is discussed because of its importance to justice and the law. The percentage of women in the Judiciary and Prosecutor's Office increased from 15% in 1990, to 27% in 1994, and 39% in 1998 (see Table 7.7 and 7.8).
In the last decades, there have been increasing numbers of women employed in the Prosecutor's Office and as private attorneys. It is expected that the number of women in the

legal system will increase, particularly in the administrative sector, considering the large number of female students in the Faculty of Law of the University of Suriname. The percentage of women in post-academic legal training is also significant: 19 out of the 26 candidates for the legislative lawyers' course (73%).

The percentage of women in the Surinamese Police Corps remained more or less the same at roughly 10% between 1994 and 1999. There are more women among the civilian personnel than in active duty, women being employed mainly in administrative jobs. Married women and women with children were excluded from the Police Corps, in accordance with Article 19 Paragraph 2 (General Police Regulation, Bulletin of Acts and Decrees 1972 No. 143, as amended in 1995). This exclusion did not apply to men.The removal of this provision in 1995 did not lead to an increase in the number of female police officers or female recruits.

Article 7, sub c

(c) To participate in non-governmental organizations and associations concerned with the public and political life of the country.

Participation of women in non-governmental organizations and associations concerned with the public and political life of the country is not prohibited. Everyone has the right of association, which also encompasses political association. It is one of the basic rights in Suriname (Article 20 G.W.). The founding of and participation in political organizations is not restricted by gender.

So far, the Women's Parliament Forum, an NGO, is the only one to organize activities to broaden political participation of women. The Women's Parliament Forum (*Vrouwen Parlement Forum*, VPF) was founded in 1994 as the result of a workshop on Women, Population and Democracy. Participants of the workshop agreed that they could identify their problems and the solutions to those problems, and that the main obstacle was their lack of influence in policy and/or decisions. This women's caucus was thus spontaneously founded as a platform for women in politics. The goal of VPF is to increase political awareness of women and to encourage the participation and contribution of women in the process of decision-making in Suriname. Its activities include organizing training in political participation, workshops, seminars and panel discussions. There is a weekly radio program and a monthly television program. During the last parliamentary elections in May 1996, the VPF slogan was "Choose Consciously, Choose a Woman."

In Suriname, as in the rest of the world, the home is considered the exclusive domain of women, because of the association with reproduction and family care. These are precisely the activities that are not greatly valued, as opposed to the highly valued public, political sector, generally associated with men. Cultural patterns generally form the basis of the unequal participation of men and women in public and political life.

Table 7.1: Voters, Gender-Specific per District 1991 and 1996

District	1991			1996		
	M	F	% F	M	F	% F
Paramaribo	65196	68551	51	68551	71805	51
Wanica	21970	20967	48	24081	22975	48
Para	4126	3673	47	4599	4259	48
Commewijne	6808	6086	47	7439	6410	46

Saramacca	4098	3681	47	4476	4061	47
Nickerie	10322	9569	48	11164	10147	47
Coronie	998	827	45	1025	830	44
Marowijne	2329	2537	52	3812	4081	51
Brokopondo	1297	1764	57	1578	2077	56
Sipaliwini	4897	7669	6103	6511	9316	5886
Total	122041	125324	50,1%	133236	135961	50%

Source: Lewis, 1997

Table 7.2: Composition of Executive Boards of Political Parties 1994-1998

	1994			1996			1998		
Parties	M	F	Tot	M	F	Tot	M	F	Tot
V.H.P.	14	1	15	14	1	15	14	1	15
N.P.S.	13	2	15	10	2	12	12	3	15
K.T.P.I.	14	1	15	13	2	15	13	2	15
S.P.A.	10	1	11	9	3	12	9	3	12
N.D.P.	10	1	11	13	2	15	13	2	15
D.A.91	13	1	14	8	0	8	8	0	8
Pendawalima	8	1	9	16	3	19	16	3	19
D.P.	3	2	5	7	2	9	7	2	9
H.P.P.	12	1	13	12	1	13	12	1	13
P.V.F.	-	-	-	9	0	9	9	0	9
D.U.S.	-	-	-	5	0	5	5	0	5
A.B.O.P.	-	-	-	9	0	9	9	0	9
P.S.V.	9	5	14	9	5	14	9	5	14
B.V.D.				15	3	18	15	3	18
Total in %	86.9	13.1	100	86.1	13.9	100	85.8	14.2	100

Sources: Secretariat Political Parties, 1999; Lewis, 1997

Table 7.3: Number of Members of Parliament by Term, and percentage of female members

Period	Name of Parliament	Male	Female	Total	% Female
1973-1977	States of Suriname	38	1	39	3
1977-1980*	Parliament of Suriname	38	1	39	3
1985-1987	The National Assembly	26	5	31	16
1987-1991	The National Assembly	47	4	51	8
1991-1996	The National Assembly	48	3	51	6
1996-	The National Assembly	43	8	51	16

*There was no Parliament between 1980 and 1985 because of Military rule. From 1985 to 1987, Parliament consisted of (non- democratically elected) appointed members. The first general election after the 1980 coup d'etat was in 1987.
Source: Lewis, 1997

Table 7.4: Composition of Political Administrative Organs in 1988, 1991, 1996

	1988				1991				1996			
	M	F	Tot	% F	M	F	Tot	% F	M	F	Tot	% F
Government	15	1	16	6	18	0	18	0	18	2	20	10
Assembly	47	4	51	8	48	3	51	6	43	8	51	16
Distr.Councils	77	11	88	13	87	13	98	13	98	7	105	7
Loc. Councils	455	66	521	13	524	107	536	17	53	13	671	20
Total	594	82	676	12	677	123	800	15	69	15	847	18

Source: Ministry of Home Affairs and Ministry of Regional Development, 1996

Table 7.5: Representation in High Councils of State in 1991 and 1998

	1991				1998			
	M	F	Tot	% F	M	F	Tot	% F
State Council	12	1	13	8	11	2	13	15
State Auditor	4	0	4	0	3	2	5	40
Labour Advisory Board	11	6	17	35	10	5	15	33
Independent Electoral Office	9	3	12	25	10	5	15	33
Central Polling Station	9	1	10	10	7	2	9	22
Total	45	11	56	20	41	16	57	28

Source: Ministry of Home Affairs, 1999

Table 7.6: Composition of Regional Administration, according to Function in 1994 and 1998

Position	1994		1998	
	M	F	M	F
Distr. Commissioner	17	0	13	2
Distr. Secretary	17	7	25	9
Dep. Distr. Secretary	9	1	37	2
Local Administrative Officer	62	8	57	23
Dep. Administrative Officer	32	7	41	25
Jun. Administrative Officer	9	1	9	10
Total	146 (86%)	24 (14%)	182 (79%)	48 (21%)

Source: Ministry of Regional Development, 1999

Table 7.7: Composition of Judiciary and Public Prosecutor's Office in 1990, 1994 and 1998

	1990		1994		1998	
	M	F	M	F	M	F
President	1	0	1	0	1	0
Vice-President	1	0	1	0	1	0
Judges	6	0	6	0	6	0
Deputy Judges	7	0	6	0	3	1
Procurator General	1	0	1	0	0	1
Advocate General	1	1	1	1	2	0
Chief Public Prosecutor	0	0	0	0	2	0
Public Prosecutor	3	0	3	2	2	6
Junior Public Prosecutor	3	2	1	4	0	0
Dep. Jun. Public Prosec.	0	1	1	1	0	3
Total	23 (85%)	4 (15%)	22 (73%)	8 (27%)	17 (61%)	11 (39%)

Source: Ministry of Justice and Police, 1999

Table 7.8: Number of Established Attorneys at Law, 1990-1998

Year	M	F	Total
1990	47 (85%)	8 (15%)	55 (100%)
1993	52 (84%)	10 (16%)	62 (100%)
1994	54 (81%)	14 (29%)	68 (100%)
1998	53 (75%)	18 (25%)	71 (100%)

Source: Ministry of Justice and Police, 1999

Representation at the International Level

Article 8

States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to ensure to women, on equal terms with men and without any discrimination, the opportunity to represent their Governments at the international level and to participate in the work of international organizations.

Surinamese legislation contains no provisions that prevent women from representing the Government at the international level and participating in international organizations. Despite this, Surinamese women are under-represented at this level. Women are not represented in the leadership of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Suriname has a total of 15 Embassies and Consulates, but since independence in 1975, there has never been a female ambassador. In 1993, the first female Consul-General was appointed. There are also few women in the permanent OAS and UN missions.

Table 8.1 presents an overview of the number of diplomats according to function and gender. It shows that the distribution according to gender hardly changed during the period of 1993-1998: 20% in 1993 and 18% in 1998, while men make up 80% and 82%, respectively.
In recent years, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs trained university graduates - men and women - as (junior) diplomats. The training was held in Suriname and abroad. In the period 1975-1994, 38% of the trained diplomats was female. Despite this relatively high percentage of trained female diplomats, their participation in active diplomatic service is low, as is apparent from Table 8.1.

Female government officials and women in NGOs are mainly visible during international meetings on women's issues. Suriname is well represented in international and regional women's organizations by women from Government as well as from NGOs. Women's organizations – with or without Government representatives – participate in meetings of international organizations such as UNIFEM and UNICEF, abroad and in Suriname, on invitation or at own initiative. The costs of participation in conferences abroad and of organizing local conferences are generally borne by the relevant international organizations.

Table 8.1: Number of Diplomats According to Function in 1993 and 1998

Position	1993			1998		
	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total
Ambassador	7	0	7	10	0	10
Counsellor	7	2	9	8	2	10
Consul Gen.	1	1	2	3	1	4
1st Secretary	6	2	8	2	2	4
2nd Secretary	6	2	8	0	0	0
3rd Secretary	1	0	1	0	0	0
Total	28 (80%)	7 (20%)	35 (100%)	23 (82%)	5 (18%)	28 (100%)

Source: Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 1998

Nationality

Article 9, Paragraph 1

States Parties shall grant women equal rights with men to acquire, change or retain their nationality. They shall ensure in particular that neither marriage to an alien nor change of nationality by the husband during marriage shall automatically change the nationality of the wife, render her stateless or force upon her the nationality of the husband.

The acquisition and loss of Surinamese nationality is governed by the Law on the Regulation of Surinamese Citizenship and Residence (Nationality and Residence Act, Bulletin of Acts and Decrees 1975 No. 4, as amended in Bulletin 1989 No. 29). This law offers women equal rights with men to acquire, to change or to retain the Surinamese nationality. However, the costs related to naturalization are not the same for men and women (Article 8 Paragraphs 2, 3 and 6 of the Nationality and Residence Act). A married woman who is naturalized together with her husband (hence as a family), does not pay any costs, while a woman who is naturalized separately from her husband or has applied for naturalization on her own, pays the full costs.

In Suriname, a woman does not automatically change her nationality by marriage. This applies to women with the Surinamese nationality (Article 13), as well as those of foreign nationality (Article 12). She also has the option of reverting to her original nationality by showing desire to do so (Article 14). A woman can only 'lose' her original nationality if she makes her desire known to do so, although this may not lead to rendering her stateless. A woman with a foreign nationality who is married to a Surinamese man, can choose to change acquire her husband's nationality. This does not apply to the man with a foreign nationality who is married to a Surinamese woman.

Except through marriage, a woman with a foreign nationality who has lived in Suriname for a minumum of five years, may apply for Surinamese citizenship by written request to the President of the Republic of Suriname. The procedure is the same for men and women. Generally speaking, most applications for naturalization are granted, but the procedure itself is quite lengthy, sometimes even taking years.

A woman can acquire a passport and travel without her husband's permission, for all persons of age may apply for a passport and travel, irrespective of their marital status.

Article 9, Paragraph 2

States Parties shall grant women equal rights with men with respect to the nationality of their children.

While, in principle, women and men have equal rights with regard to their own nationality, a woman does not have the same rights as her husband with regard to their children's nationality. This is determined by the law on persons and by family law, as well as by various principles underlying nationality. In accordance with Articles 3(a) and (b); 7 and 10 of the Nationality and Residence Act, the father's nationality is decisive for legal and legitimately acknowledged children. Natural children, not acknowledged by the father, in principle hold the mother's nationality (Articles 3(c) and 4(b) of aforementioned Act). However, a child who is born from a mother with the Surinamese nationality is allowed to acquire his or her father's foreign nationality.

Minors can hold an own passport from the age of two years. Children who do not have an own passport and children younger than two years, are placed in their father's passport if they are legitimate, that is to say, if born in wedlock. They are placed in their mother's passport if they are natural children, who are not acknowledged by the father. If they are natural children, but are acknowledged by the father, they can be added in either their father's or their mother's passport. Both legitimate and natural, acknowledged minors require their father's permission to travel.

PART III

Education

Article 10

States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in order to ensure to them equal rights with men in the field of education and in particular to ensure, on a basis of equality of men and women:

The Constitution of Suriname is based on equality of men and women in the field of education, as stated in Article 39 Paragraph 1: "The State recognizes and guarantees the right to education of all citizens and offers them equal opportunities for schooling".

The Ministry of Education is charged by the Government with the responsibility for education in Suriname. Education at all levels is virtually completely State-funded and is in principle free of charge for everyone. However, this situation is threatening to change as a result of the current economic crisis. The allocation to education in the national budget has decreased from about 19% in 1992 to about 5% in 1994; it increased to 9% in 1996 and fell back to 5% again in 1997. For 1998, the education sector was allocated about 10% of the total national budget.
As a result of decreasing state income, the Government is no longer capable of providing full funding for education. For some years now, a growing financial input is required of students. Even so, funds are limited for education, and as a result, there is a shortage of teaching materials, as well as physical problems, which stagnate the educational process.

Although women do hold management positions in the Ministry of Education, and there are numerous female school principals, as per 1998 there were no women in leadership functions of the Ministry of Education.

Article 10, sub a

(a) The same conditions for career and vocational guidance, for access to studies and for the achievement of diplomas in educational establishments of all categories in rural as well as in urban areas; this equality shall be ensured in preschool, general, technical, professional and higher technical education, as well as in all types of vocational training;

Career and vocational guidance

The right to freely choose a profession and work is laid down in the Constitution in Article 26 Paragraph 3: "Everyone has the right to freely choose a profession and work, barring statutory regulations". The Gc ernment has charged the Bureau of Educational Information and Study Facilities of the Ministry of Education with providing information and guidance on possibilities of studying in Suriname and abroad. The information is accessible to everyone. It is not specifically aimed at women and it covers mostly formal education. Because the Bureau has no departments in the districts, people in the rural areas and the interior lack information. The Government needs to provide more information on career and vocational possibilities in the area of technology, in particular to girls and women.

Women make up more than two-thirds of the teachers in schools for primary, junior secondary, and senior secondary education. The percentage of female school principals in primary education was about 13% in 1990, and climbed to 32% in 1993, to 68% in 1996, and 70% in

1998. The percentage of female principals of junior secondary schools (general and junior vocational) was 47% in 1996 and 48% in 1998.

Access

There are no provisions that prevent women from having access to education and acquiring diplomas. In Suriname, boys and girls have equal access to primary education. There is a Compulsory Education Act for children of 7-12 years of age, but there is no strict control of the implementation of the Compulsory Education Act. In 1992, the rates of participation for the age categories of 4-12 years and 13-19 years in the whole country were respectively 75.3% and 55.6%[7]. Unfortunately, no recent figures are available.

In general, the number of female students is higher than the number of male students. This is particularly true in schools for junior vocational education (LBGO), junior secondary general education (MULO), junior domestic science (N.O.), and senior secondary general, university preparatory and teacher training colleges (VWMKO), as well as in University and the Institute for Advanced Teacher Training (IOL) (see Table 10.1).

But the number of men exceeds the number of women in technical education and primary education. The increase of the number of female students became manifest around 1993, with boys and men leaving school much earlier to seek work in order to earn an income.

With regard to primary education, the higher number of boys compared to girls is not surprising, as more boys than girls are born annually, and because of compulsory education, which obliges boys and girls alike to attend school for a number of years (see Table 10.2).

The schools for junior vocational education and domestic science can be considered school for traditional women's jobs, such as nursing asssitants, orderlies, etc. This might be an explanation for the higher number of girls attending these schools. The technical schools train people in so-called traditional men's jobs (mechanics, electricians, etc.), which would explain the higher number of boys attending these schools.

The Government is responsible for final examinations of schools for formal education, and boys and girls acquire the same diplomas. This is true for all categories of educational insitutions in Suriname, in rural as well as urban areas. No gender-specific information is available on examination results, making comparisons based on gender impossible.

Article 10, sub b

(b) Access to the same curricula, the same examinations, teaching staff with qualifications of the same standard and school premises and equipment of the same quality;

Same curricula and examinations

Based on educational legislation, women and men have access to the same curricula and the same examinations. Identical standards apply to both sexes in practice as well.

Most of the curricula currently used in primary education were developed in the nineteen eighties by the Curriculum Development Department of the Ministry of Education. In 1998, this department started to evaluate these methods[8]

Teachers with the same qualifications

[7] Situation Analysis of Children and Women in Suriname, 1995. Unicef/SPS 1995, p. 63.

[8] MINOV, Department of Curriculum Development, 1999

There is no legal discrimination of boys and girls in this regard. There is a degree of discrimination between urban areas and rural areas. The latter are at a distinct disadvantage, for the Government often posts less qualified teachers, with a teaching certificate specifically for the interior or district student teachers, in the interior[9]. They are paid less than fully qualified teachers.

Article 10, sub c

(c) The elimination of any stereotyped concept of the roles of men and women at all levels and in all forms of education by encouraging coeducation and other types of education which will help to achieve this aim and, in particular, by the revision of textbooks and school programmes and the adaptation of teaching methods;

The law does not contain specific provisions with regard to stereotyped concepts of the roles of men and women. Schools are co-educational, with the exception of a few denominational schools at the levels of junior secondary and primary education, which still offer girl-only education.

Studies carried out in 1998 and 1999 show that there are still stereotyped roles of men and women in textbooks, programs and teaching methods for pre-school and primary education. The Ministry of Education has promised the following structural approach to this problem:

- The Department of Curriculum Development of the Ministry has been implementing a project since 1997, to review the curricula of primary education.
- The Basic Life Skills Education program was introduced in Suriname in 1996. In the program, much attention is paid to the socio-emotional development of children, developing their own opinion, thinking about their position and awareness of self-respect and rights. Attention is also paid to health eduction (eating well, hygiene, dangers of tobacco, drugs, alcohol, etc.). The program aims at students in formal education and sets high priority on gender sensitivity in the training program for teachers and others involved, as well as in the content of educational material for students. It is recommended that all materials and programmes be evaluated one year after their implementation.

Article 10, sub d

(d) The same opportunities to benefit from scholarships and other study grants;

According to Surinamese law, women have the same opportunities to benefit from scholarships and other-grants, as the law is not gender-biased with regard to awarding scholarships and grants. The Bureau of Educational Information and Study Facilities, which is charged with the implementation of scholarship policy, is not supposed to make any distinction according to gender. National scholarships for the Surinamese Government are awarded on the basis of the following criteria:

- statement of gross income of parents
- holder of the Surinamese nationality
- number of children younger than 21 years living at home
- number of (other) children in the family who are at University.

[9] Neither those with the Teacher's Certificate for the Interior nor the district student teachers attend pedagogic institutes. There is a special training course of the Ministry of Education and Community Development for the Teacher's Certificate for the Interior. No special preliminary training is required. This course is not required for the district student teachers; they assist the teacher.

Besides student grants for local students, the Surinamese Government also provides possibilities for youngsters to study abroad. In the nineteen nineties, the policy with regard to international scholarships was drastically altered. The change was made to a system of student loans, and the focus was also shifted from Europe (the Netherlands) to the region, in particular Brazil, Trinidad, Jamaica and the U.S.A. An evaluation performed in 1998 of the project "Funding Studies Abroad" over the period of April 1992 to 1 August 1997, shows that an average of 62% of scholarship students in the various categories was male. The percentage of men is much higher in technological studies (about 80%), while women make up about 85% of the students of social studies (see Tables 10.4 through 10.6).

Article 10, sub e

(e) The same opportunities for access to programmes of continuing education including adult and functional literacy programmes, particularly those aimed at reducing, at the earliest possible time, any gap in education existing between men and women;

Surinamese law has no specific provisions for men and women with regard to accessibility of continuing education. There are few functional literacy programs available within the official educational system. Government literacy programs are implemented mainly in Greater Paramaribo. Literacy programs in the interior are conducted on a small scale by NGOs. There are no separate literacy programs for women, but the majority of students in these programmes is female (roughly 95%)[10].

According to the 1980 census, literacy rates were as follows: men 90.0% and women 89.5%. The literacy rate for the total population was 89.8% in 1980. Recent population data are lacking (see Table 1b). With regard to literacy in the urban areas, which are also the most densely populated (Districts of Paramaribo and Wanica), data from the General Bureau of Statistics (1998) show that literacy among women is slightly lower (87%) than among men (90%) over the period 1993-1997, though it is increasing for both (see Table 1b). Due to adverse developments such as the war in the interior (1986-1992) and the socio-economic crisis, it may be expected that a new generation of young illiterates will arise in the interior from among the children of school age who were unable to attend school because of the war, as well as among the young dropouts and young refugees. Now already the illiteracy rate is highest in the interior[11].

Article 10, sub f

(f) The reduction of female student drop-out rates and the organization of programmes for girls and women who have left school prematurely;

There are no data available on drop-outs, but a recent thesis[12], based on study conducted in 1996, shows that only 50% of the students enrolled attain a positive result. The bad achievements of boys and, in general, children from a weak social environment, are especially noteworthy.

Girls dropping out of school early may be a result of (teenage) pregnancies. Girls who leave school because of pregnancy, have the option to participate in a project for student-mothers, which aims at encouraging teenage mothers to complete their schooling, to (further) develop a

[10] Ministry of Education, 1999

[11] Ministry of Regional Development, 1999.

[12] C. Ringeling, *Repeating and Underachievement in Suriname Elementary Schools; a Literature Overview, an Empirical Quantitative Study and Policy Recommendations*. Paramaribo, May, 1999.

positive self-image, and to prevent another unwanted pregnancy. The student-mothers' project was initiated in 1989 by the Government and then passed into the hands of an NGO (*Stichting JOVROCE*) in 1992. The project was initiated because of the relatively high percentage of registered births in 1989 in the age group 10-19 years, namely 17%. Table 10 shows that this percentage has remained consistent in subsequent years. According to JOVROCE, the number of teenage mothers re-entering school is encouraging. A thorough evaluation of the project has been promised.

Contrary to the policy of senior secondary schools, teenage mothers are not always re-admitted to all junior secondary schools. The reason given by the junior secondary schools is that teenage mothers would have a negative influence on other girls. Teenage fathers, however, are not barred from attending school.

Article 10, sub g

(g) The same opportunities to participate actively in sports and physical education;

As far as could be verified, there are no specific discriminatory statutory regulations with regard to sports and physical education. Sports and physical education are part of the curriculum of primary, junior secondary and senior secondary schools in Suriname, and classes are given by specially trained teachers. The participation of girls and women in sports is encouraged, particularly in soft ball, basketball and football. The participation of girls and women is increasing in organized sports activities, in physical education classes, and in attendance of courses for trainers. The influence of cultural factors, particularly religion, which in the past was an obstacle to the participation of girls and women in sports and physical education, is now somewhat reduced.

Article 10, sub h

(h) Access to specific educational information to help to ensure the health and well-being of families, including information and advice on family planning.

There are no discriminatory measures in national legislation with regard to information on general health care. There remain, however, old penal provisions on birth control, sex education and distribution. The Penal Code (Articles 533 and 534) penalizes "the person who exhibits contraceptives for the prevention of pregnancies, and offers contraceptives, contraceptive services and publications for the prevention of pregnancies". However, both the Government and non-government organizations implement relevant programs to provide information and advice on family planning. In school, the subjects science and biology are components of elementary, junior secondary and senior secondary school curricula, which provide sex education, while the Basic Life Skills project (see Article 10c) focusses on educational and health aspects as well.

Apart from this, information is presented via the media and in public meetings organized by the following institutions:

- Bureau of Public Health, in particular the Department of Health Education (information on breast feeding, malaria and dengue, vaccinations);
- The National STD/HIV Program, in which the Government and private groups cooperate in prevention, research and training with regard to sexually transmitted diseases and AIDS;
- Regional Health Services for health care of people in the districts;
- Medical Mission for health care of people in the interior;

- The Lobi Foundation (family planning, sex education, also in schools) and other private organizations such as women's organizations.

There is also the Johanna Elsenhout Women's Documentation Center and library, which provides information on all areas relating to the development of women and their position in society, including health and well-being. All Government and NGO programs are accessible to both men and women.

Appendices to Article 10

Overview of Formal Education in Suriname

Formal education in Suriname is divided as follows:
primary education, consisting of:
- 2 years of pre-school education (4-5 years of age) (KLO); and
- 6 years of primary education (6-12 years of age) or 6 years of special education (6-12 years of age) (GLO);

junior secondary education (VOJ) from 12 years of age (duration: 3-4 years), consisting of:
- elementary vocational training (EBO); or
- junior vocational training (VBO), which includes the Elementary Technical School (ETS); or
- secondary special education; or
- junior domestic science education (LNO); or
- junior technical education (LTO); or
- junior vocational education (LBGO); or
- junior secondary general education (MULO).

senior secondary education (VOS) from 16 years of age (duration: 2-4 years), consisting of:
- schools for nursing and related professions (COVAB); or
- commercial school (IMEAO); or
- polytechnic school (NATIN); or
- teacher training college for nursery school teachers (Kweek-A); or
- teacher training cololege for primary school teachers ; or
- senior secondary general education (HAVO); or
- university preparatory education (VWO).

higher education, consisting of 2-5 year courses:
- advanced training of nurses and related professions (COVAB); or
- dental assistants' training (JTV); or
- the Institute for Advanced Teacher Training (IOL), with some 21 courses; or
- the Polytechnic College (PTC), with 4 courses; or
- the Academy for Higher Art and Cultural Education (AHKCO), with two main sections: journalism and socio-cultural educational work; or
- the University of Suriname, with some 13 courses.

Table 10.1: Enrolment per School Type inSchool Years 1993/94 through 1995/96

School Type	1993/94			1994/95			1995/96		
	male	female	total	male	female	total	male	female	total
KLO	8243	7891	16134	7670	7306	14976			14870
BO	754	375	1129	698	363	1061	638	312	950
GLO	36362	34634	70996	32067	30546	62613	.	.	74635
LBGO	3219	5221	8440	5417	7766	13183	5713	[illegible]	14172
MULO	5357	7408	12765	2874	4883	7757	2560	4256	6816
LTO	2084*	91*	2175*	2059	85	2144	2208	86	2294
EBO	1395	373	1768	317	-	317	939	144	1083
ETS	*	*	*	492	3	495	466	3	469
NO	-	284	284	-	264	264	-	268	268
VBO	140	75	215	139	79	218	163	93	256
VWMKO	2535	3697	6232	2206	3834	6040	2334	4226	6560
UNIV.	1182	1280	2462	1182	1280	2462	1170	1429	2599
IOL	442	897	1339	442	897	1339	554	908	1462
OLNO	51	-	51	51	-	51	51	1	52
AHKCO	.	.	183	.	.	.	71	129	200
Total	ca.61764	ca.62226	124173	ca.55614	ca.57445	ca112920	ca.16867	ca.20314	126686

* combined numbers of LTS and ETS students

Sources: *Statistical Yearbook 1996 of the Republic of Suriname*, and Dennis R. Craig & Margo Illes-Deekman, *The Education Systems of Suriname and the British Commonwealth Caribbean: A Comparitive Study*, 1998.

Legend:

KLO *Kleuteronderwijs*: NurserySchool
BO *Buitengewoon Onderwijs*: Special Education School
GLO *Gewoon Lager Onderwijs*: Primary School
LBGO *Lager Beroepsgericht Onderwijs*: Junior Vocation-Oriented School
MULO *Meer Uitgebreid Lager Onderwijs*: Junior Secondary General School
LTO *Lager Technisch Onderwijs*: Junior Technical School
EBO *Elementair Beroepsonderwijs*: Elementary Vocational School
ETS *Eenvoudige Technische School*: Elementary Technical School
NO *Nijverheids Onderwijs*: Domestic Science School
VBO *Voortgezet Buitengewoon Onderwijs*: Junior Special Education School
VWMKO *Voorbereidend Wetenschappelijk Middelbaar en Kweekschoolonderwijs*: University Preparatory School, Senior Secondary General School and Teacher Training College
Univ University
OLNO *Opleidingsinstituut voor Leerkrachten Nijverheidsonderwijs:* Training Institute for Teachers for Domestic Science Schools
AHKCO *Academie voor Hogere Kunst en Cultuuronderwijs:* Academy for Higher Art and Culture Education

Table 10.2: Number of Live Births 1993-1997

	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997
Male	4820	4261	4469	4908	5555
Female	4578	4157	4248	4485	5239
Total	9398	8418	8717	9393	10794

Source: Central Civil Registry Office, *Suriname Demographic Data 1992-1997*, a publication of the Department of Demographic Statistics of the Central Civil Registry Office, Paramaribo, September 1998

Table 10.3: Number of Graduates in Higher Education, 1994-1996

Type of Education	Male	Female	Total
UNIVERSITY			
Medical Sciences	26	19	45
Public Administration	2	2	4
Sociology	6	7	13
Economics	54	50	104
Law	20	40	60
Faculty of Technological Sciences	22	8	30
Advanced Teacher Training College:			
LO	50	152	202
MO-A	15	43	58
MO-B	8	15	23
Other Higher Education:			
AHKCO	-	-	16
JTV	1	8	9
Total	204 (37%)	344 (63%)	565 (100%)

Source: *Surveys of Higher Education, 1998*

Table 10.4: Number of Local Scholarships Granted according to School Type, 1993/94 through 1996/97

School Type	93/94	94/95	95/96	96/97
VOJ	171	214	66	.
VOS	432	387	157	398
HBO	59	45	19	16
UNIV	146	78	70	94
Univ. Bridging year	30	32	5	27

Source: Bureau of Higher Education, October 1997

Table 10.5: Number of Foreign Scholarships according to Subject, Gender and Category, April 1992 – August 1997[13]

Category	Hum.	Soc.Sc.	Lang.	Ex.Sc.	Phys.	Tech.	Agrar.	Other	Total	(%)
1. Private and Loans										
Male	2	7	0	10	13	24	4	5	65	54 %
Female	9	9	4	10	12	2	3	6	55	46 %
Total	11	16	4	20	25	26	7	11	120	100 %
2. Former Scholarship Students Abroad (the Netherlands and Brazil)										
Male	2	10	2	9	15	38	4	9	89	64 %
Female	11	7	2	3	16	2	3	9	53	36 %
Total	13	17	4	12	31	40	7	18	142	100 %
3. Current Scholarship Students Abroad (the Netherlands, Brazil and the U.S.A.)										
Male	1	7	0	6	12	28	7	11	72	47 %
Female	1	2	1	2	14	8	5	5	38	53 %
Total	1	9	1	8	26	36	12	16	110	100 %

Source: R.Assen, B.Sc., Managing Director of R.A. Consultancy (being established), *Statistical Study of Project 12/27 "Funding of Studies Abroad. Part 1 and 2.* Paramaribo, 1 May 1998

[13] The category of Private and Loans consists of people who started a study abroad before 1 June ~~1~~[st], 1994, 'at own expense', for which the necessary foreign exchange was purchased from the Government at a special, relatively low, rate. Ex-Scholarship Students Netherlands/Brazil are persons who have studied or are studying in the Netherlands or Brazil, and for whom the ~~BOS~~Government~~'s~~ no longer provides scholarship funding as of 1 August ~~1~~[st], 1997.
Remaining scholarship students are:
Current Scholarship Students Netherlands/Brazil: scholarship students in the Netherlands and Brazil, who receive funding from the Government~~BOS's~~ as of 1 August ~~1~~[st], 1997.
Scholarship Students USA: persons who have studied or are studying in the United States of America.
Returnees: Higher Vocational Education or University graduates for whom the ~~BOS~~ Government only funded the return to Suriname, as of 1 August ~~1~~[st], 1997.
The humanities are: pedagogy~~ics~~, psychology, ~~logopaedics~~ speech therapy and agogy~~iek~~; social sciences are a.o. economics, business administration and sociology. The exact sciences are mathematics, actuarial science and computer science.
Others: in this case a scholarship student whose study is not apparent from the files and also persons who studied music, sports, communication scienc~~es~~~~tudies~~ or physical education.

Table 10.6: Scholarship Students according to Level, April 1992 – August 1997

	Level of Education			
	Interm. Vocational Education %	Higher Vocational Education %	University %	Total % (abs.)
1. Private and loans				
Male	5	38	57	100 (65)
Female	9	27	64	100 (55)
Total	7	33	60	100 (120)
2. Former Scholarship Students Abroad (the Netherlands and Brazil)				
Male	0	67	33	100 (89)
Female	1	64	35	100 (53)
Total	0	66	34	100 (142)
3. Current Scholarschip Students Abroad (the Netherlands, Brazil and the U.S.A.)				
Male	19	54	27	100 (72)
Female	8	43	49	100 (38)
Total	16	50	34	100 (110)

Source: R.Assen, B.Sc., Managing Director of R.A. Consultancy (being established), *Statistical Study of Project 12/27 "Funding of Studies Abroad. Part 1 and 2.* Paramaribo, 1 May 1998

Table 10.7: Number of Live Births According to Age of Mother, 1993-1997

Age of Mother	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997
10-14 Years	430	133	67	56	81
15-19 Years	1424	1335	1371	1506	1777
Total	1854	1468	1438	1562	1858
% of Tot. Number of Live Births	19.7	17.4	16.5	16.6	17.2

Source: Central Civil Registry Office, *Suriname Demographic Data 1992-1997*, a publication of the Department of Demographic Statistics of the Central Civil Registry Office, Paramaribo, September 1998

Table 10.8: Number of Schools in Suriname according to School Type and Participation of Government (1993/94 and 1997/98)[14]

School Type	1993/94		1997/98	
	Number	Government Share (%)	Number	Government Share (%)
Nursery School	220	49.6	300	48.0
Primary	273		288	49.7
BO	24	41.8	32	50.0
MULO	47	59.9	50	60.0
LBGO	40		36	50.0
LTO	7	100.0	7	100.0
LNO	2	50.0	2	50.0
EBO	4	100.0	3	100.0
VBO	3	100.0	8	100.0
VWO	6	93.8	6	83,3
HAVO	2	100.0	3	100.0
MBO	5	100.0	9	77,8
HBO	6	33.3	5	40.0
University	1	100.0	1	100.0

Sources:
Dennis R. Craig & Margo Illes-Deekman, *The Education Systems of Suriname and the British Commonwealth Caribbean: A Comparitive Study*, 1998
Situation Analysis of Children and Women in Suriname 1995, Unicef / *Stichting Planbureau Suriname*, 1995
Ministry of Education and Community Development, Department of Scientific Research and Planning, 1999

[14] BO includes ~~B.O.A~~ special education classes of various public and private primary schools

Table 10.9: University Enrolment According to Course, 1993-1995[15]

Course	Enrolment								
	1993			1994			1995		
	M	F	Tot.	M	F	Tot.	M	F	Tot.
Law	326	476	802	334	547	881	347	594	941
Business Economics	231	236	467	252	295	547	249	349	598
Planned Economy	64	74	138	61	69	130	60	67	127
Sociology	11	37	48	10	37	47	9	33	42
Education	32	58	90	25	48	73	24	52	76
Public Administration	37	34	71	39	32	71	45	69	114
Business Administration	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Mineral Production	45	27	72	49	30	79	48	32	80
Agricultural Production	53	44	97	57	44	101	50	45	95
Electrical Engineering	60	7	67	74	10	84	80	13	93
Mechanical Engineering	50	3	53	73	2	75	69	5	74
Infrastructure	49	23	72	41	24	65	48	31	79
Environmental Science	-	-	-	-	4	4	1	2	3
Medicine	171	136	307	167	135	302	161	143	304
Physical Therapy	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	4	5
Total %	1129 49.4%	1155 50.6%	2284 100%	1182 48.1%	1277 51.9%	2459 100%	1192 45.3%	1439 54.7%	2631 100%

[15] Enrolment refers to all stages. Therefore this regards the total number of students of the particular course, ~~who have~~ enrolled in that particular year.

Table 10.9, continued

	Enrolment								
	1996			1997			1998		
Course	M	F	Tot.	M	F	Tot.	M	F	Tot.
Law	324	583	907	310	553	863	284	513	797
Business Economics	214	310	524	206	330	536	215	382	597
Planned Economy	51	49	100	46	47	93	44	44	88
Sociology	6	32	38	7	34	41	7	41	48
Education	28	67	95	25	58	83	22	62	84
Public Administration	69	92	161	81	106	187	76	136	212
Business Administration	-	-	-	14	33	47	8	16	24
Mineral Production	47	38	85	54	48	102	54	43	97
Agrarian Production	47	45	92	41	41	82	39	31	70
Electrical Engineering	73	12	85	72	19	91	85	21	106
Mechanical Engineering	66	4	70	50	4	54	66	7	73
Infrastructure	43	35	78	51	36	87	56	42	98
Environmental Science	1	3	4	-	-	-	4	3	7
Medicine	161	160	321	154	160	314	158	72	230
Physical Therapy	1	4	5	2	5	7	2	6	8
Total	1131	1434	2565	1113	1474	2587	1120	1419	2539
%	44.1%	55.9%	100%	43.0%	57.0%	100%	44.1%	55.9%	100%

Sources:
Dennis R. Craig & Margo Illes-Deekman, *The Education Systems of Suriname and the British Commonwealth Caribbean: A Comparitive Study for the Department of Higer Education, Ministry of Education and Community Development Suriname*, 1998
Bureau of the Faculty of Social Sciences, 1999
Bureau of Student Affairs*, 1999

Table 10.10: Enrolment at Academy for Higher Arts and Culture Education (AHKCO), 1993-1998

Gender:	1996	1997	1998
Male	55	54	44
Female	121	125	136
Total	176	179	180

Sources: AHKCO administration office, 1998

Table 10.11: Polytechnic College Enrolment according to Course, 1997/98 – 1998/99

Course	1997/98			1998/99		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Electrical Engineering	83	2	85	32	-	32
Mechanical Engineering	91	4	95	37	1	38
Construction	16	10	26	12	2	14
Civil Engineering	29	6	35	6	3	9
Total	219	22	241	87	6	93
%	90.9	9.1	100	93.5	6.5	100

Source: Polytechnic College Student Administration, 1999

Employment

Article 11, Paragraph 1

States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in the field of employment in order to ensure, on a basis of equality of men and women, the same rights, in particular:

Article 11, Paragraph 1 sub a

(a) The right to work as an inalienable right of all human beings;

Internationally, Suriname is involved in treaties – whether or not ratified – which regulate the labour rights of women. Suriname ratified the Night Work Conventon (No. 41) and the Employment Policy Convention (No. 122) of the International Labour Organisation (I.L.O.) on June 15, 1976. Partly because of the first convention and under pressure from social groups, among which the unions, Suriname abolished the prohibition of night work from its legislation through State Decree 1983 No. 91, as the prohibition of night work is considered discriminatory toward women.

Suriname has furthermore acceded to the International Convention on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ECOSOC). This convention compels Suriname to treat female and male workers equally.

Besides the treaties mentioned, there are other I.L.O. treaties, such as Maternity Protection (1952 No. 103), Equal Remuneration (1951 No. 100), Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) 1958 No. 111), Workers with Family Responsibilities (1981 no. 156), which have not been ratified by Suriname. These treaties are in agreement with CEDAW and the Constitution, but have not been ratified. I.L.O. Treaty No. 103 (Maternity Protection) has not been ratified because of the aspect of costs. Employers, and in particular small companies, indicate that implementation of this treaty, namely 12 weeks of maternity leave and reimbursement of the costs of delivery, imply high expenses. The consequence of ratification could be that women would no longer be employed, which would mean a further weakening of the position of women on the labour market.

Ratification of I.L.O. Treaty No. 156 (Workers with Family Responsibility) is also hindered by the aspect of costs, as the obligations resulting from the Treaty would be very costly to the Surinamese economy. Ratification of I.L.O Treaty No. 100 (Equal Remuneration) cannot take place, because Suriname has no comprehensive occupational classification system. This system is linked to a fixed wage system. Suriname does not have a minimum wage system either.

An international I.L.O. project, carried out in nine countries and which centres on the rights of female workers, was also carried out under the auspices of the Ministry of Labor. On October 1, 1995, the working group "Women Workers' Rights" was installed, consisting of representatives of the business community, the unions, the Government (including women's policy) and women's organizations, to manage the I.L.O project "Training and Education on the Rights of Women Workers". As of 1 March, 1996, the status of the working group has been changed to a National Steering Group Women Workers' Rights. Part of the project has been to carry out studies in order to gain more insight in the position of certain categories of working women, so that policy can be formulated and activities carried out aimed at increasing the awareness of women

workers, and to organise training for women workers, union leaders and representatives of the business community.

As part of the action plan of the project mentioned above, studies were carried out with regard to:

- women in technical professions, an analysis of the situation of women in technical occupations in Suriname (publication 1995)
- the working situation of workers in dry goods stores (publication August 1998)
- an evaluation of gender equality in the Surinamese labor legislation and Collective Labor Agreements (publication September 1998)
- sexual harrassment at work (publication September 1998)

The steering group further organized various workshops, during which the results of the above-mentioned studies were presented to a broader public. I.L.O posters were also distributed with regard to the rights of women workers. In 1998, two folders were published with information for women workers on their rights.

Legal measures were also taken at the national level with regard to the right to work. Article 26, Paragraph 1 of the Constitution stipulates that one of the fundamental rights is that everyone has the right to work in accordance with his or her capacities. Regulations with regard to labour can also be found in the Labour Act, the Civil Code and the Personnel Act (the latter applies to civil servants). The Labour Act and the Civil Code do not make distinctions on the basis of gender, and apply to all employees in a company. The Surinamese Police Corps has taken measures to eliminate discrimination of women in employment. An amendment was made to the police regulations, which abolished the discrimination of married women and mothers entering the police force.

In Suriname, the Ministry of Labor is responsible for national labour policy. There is no compulsory registration of job-seekers in Suriname, so that the total number of job-seekers cannot be provided, specified according to gender, age, etc. No national labour statistics are available. The available figures are only for the largest districts, namely Paramaribo and Wanica, which together account for more than 70% of the total population.

Table 11.3 gives an idea of the percentage of unemployed in Paramaribo and Wanica, gender-specific between 1993 and 1997. This overview shows a larger percentage of unemployed women than men. The percentage of working women in the Districts of Paramaribo and Wanica rose from 32% in 1986 to 39% in 1990, and dropped to 35% in 1992 (General Bureau of Statistics). Since 1994, however, the percentage has remained conssistent at 34% (see Table 11.2). 33% of all persons employed full-time is female, as opposed to 67% male in the period 1994-1997 (Table 11.4).

In order to promote employment of women, the Government (particularly through the Labour Mobilization Unit) and NGOs (National Women's Movement), have set up employment programs for women, to teach skills required in the formal sector.

According to the Law of 22 August 1964, the Employment Service of the Minsitry of Labour is charged with employment mediation[16]. The project "Contribution in Labour Costs" of the Ministry

[16] In: Ministry of Labour, Labour Market Information. Pulbication of the most relevant information of the labour market situation in Suriname for the period 1993-1996. Paramaribo, November, 1997, pp. 50-54, 86.

of Labour, was implemented between 1994 and 1996. The target groups of this project were young people without working experience, with junior or senior secondary school certificates, and women returning to the labour market. The idea of the project was that the Government would contribute 60% of the wages during a certain period (6 months), in order to increase chances on the labour market of the target groups mentioned. The project was not very succesful, because employers preferred experienced workers.

As was noted earlier, the reason for the relatively high unemployment of women is not only a lack of jobs, but primarily the lack of specific skills/expertise aimed at the labour market. From the side of the Government there is the Labour Mobilisation Unit (SAO), founded by the Ministry of Labour. The idea was to organize additional vocational training courses for dropouts who were registered as job-seekers with the Ministry. The training courses are short (6-9 months) and are aimed at technical professions, entrepreneurship and specific business training for both men and women.

But fewer women than men participate in the vocational training courses organized by the SAO. The reason for this is that the training courses are mainly technical, and men traditionally are more interested in technical training than women. In the period 1986 through 1990, 300 students participated in the vocational training courses, 36 of whom were women (12%). The women who participated were mainly interested in dressmaking and sewing. At the end of 1997, the percentage of women participating in S.A.O. training courses was only 4%. The number of female students has increased in 1997-1998, because the National Women's Movement is organizing training courses for women in traditional men's occupations, such as carpentry and masonry, in cooperation with SAO.

The goals of SAO are:
- occupational resettlement, retraining and in-service training for job-seekers and unemployed persons;
- training of dropouts from formal education;
- stimulating entrepreneurship;
- organizing specific and/or specific business courses;
- occupational resettlement, retraining and in-service training for civil servants.

The expertise center "Women and Business" was founded on June 6, 1994 by the Ministry of Labor. It arose from the project "Women Entrepreneurs in Suriname", which was carried out by the Expertise Center "Women and Management" of the *Hogeschool van Amsterdam*. The goal of this center is to support and guide starting women enterpreneurs. The center would like to anticipate the problems of the current socio-economic situation and the position of women in it. It wants to achieve this by:
1. offering women training when starting, building up and expanding their business;
2. involving intermediate agencies for entrepreneurs (such as banks, Chamber of Commerce, etc.) and pointing out to them the possibilities of female entrepreneurs as potential clients. In this way, the accessibility of these agencies to women can also be improved.

In the initial stages, the expertise center will serve the following target groups:
1. small, independent female entrepreneurs
2. female entrepreneurs with between 1 and 4 employees
3. female entrepreneurs who have not been active for more than two years (starters).

In 1997, the center organized training courses and offered supervision to starters, but has became bogged down when management staff left.

Article 11, Paragraph 1 sub b

(b) The right to the same employment opportunities, including the application of the same criteria for selection in matters of employment;

Pursuant to Article 12 Paragraph 2 of the Personnel Act, the following criteria apply for appointment:
- the age of 18 years must have been reached,
- one must not have been found to be physically unsuitable after a medical check-up, and
- one must meet the legal requirements to be appointment to the position one wishes to fulfill.

With regard to women, however, specific discriminatory criteria seem to apply, mainly in the area of reproduction. Although further study is necessary, women's organizations have reported that repeated pregnancies can be cause for dismissal on the grounds of unsuitability.
Futhermore, Article 15 Paragraph 1 sub a of the Personnel Act indicates that labour contracts may be signed with married women. The rationale of this stipulation is that when the Government appoints a married female civil servant, it accepts the risk of interrupted service because of pregnancy and childbirth. If it wishes to avoid this risk, then the possibility is created of employment on the basis of a labour contract instead of full employment in civil service. However, the above-mentioned discriminatory provisions in the Personnel Act are not implemented in practice.

Article 11, Paragraph 1 sub c

(c) The right to free choice of profession and employment, the right to promotion, job security and all benefits and conditions of service and the right to receive vocational training and retraining, including apprenticeships, advanced vocational training and recurrent training;

Choice of Profession
The right to choose one's profession and employment is recognized by the Constitution in Articles 26 Paragraph 3 and 27 Paragraph 1 sub c, which states that "Everyone has the right to freely choose one's profession and employment, barring statutory regulations".
Furthermore, the State must guarantee equality of opportunities in the choice of profession and type of employment, and it is prohibited to bar entry to any profession and employment on the basis of gender (Article 27 Paragraph 1 sub c).

There are no legal provisions aimed specifically at women for setting up an enterprise or practicing a profession. But there is a law, namely the Decree on Licenses for Enterprises and Professions (S.B. 1981 No. 145), that applies to both men and women. A number of areas are indicated in this decree which require licenses for setting up enterprises or practising a profession (trade, industry, craft, tourism). The above-mentioned decree furthermore describes the procedures for applying for, granting, revoking, or annulling a license. In practice, freedom of choice is rather limited for women, in particular because of existing ideas on the roles of women and men, as is evident from the following.

In the agricultural and industrial sectors, the percentage of women remains low, respectively 9.5% and 5.1 % of the total number of people working in these sectors in 1996 (see Table 11.6). The relatively low number of women in Paramaribo and Wanica working in the agricultural sector may be explained in part by the fact that society does not recognize women as breadwinners and if they do work in agriculture, this will not be reflected in the labour statistics.

As can be seen in Table 11.6, women are in the majority in particularly the administrative professions and services, education, etc. In principle, boys and girls have the same options with regard to choosing a profession. Because of traditional ideas, however, some professions are carried out mainly by men (for instance, electricians, painters, construction workers), while mainly women can be found in others (cleaners, secretaries, receptionists, kindergarten teachers, beauticians). Up to 1995 the number of women in academic professions was steadily growing, but in 1995 the number dropped (see Table 11.6).

A survey of vacancies held by the Ministry of Labour in 1992 showed that 70% of vacancies were in technical and manufacturing jobs. These are precisely the categories in which women are under-represented[17].

Promotion

Article 24 Paragraph 1 of the Personnel Act stipulates for civil servants – men and women – that they can be promoted on the basis of suitability, competence, reliability and experience. Promotion of public servants is detailed in the Civil Service Remuneration Decree (Bulletin of Acts and Decrees 1980 No. 153, as amended in Bulletin1990 No. 71). In this decree, promotion and appointment are not linked to gender. In contrast to civil servants, employees in the private sector do not have legal provisions with regard to the right to promotion, neither in the Labour Act nor in the Civil Code.

Table 11.6 shows that in the period 1993-1996 no more than 14% of female employees held managerial positions. Women are under-represented in managerial positions in Government as well as in private enterprise and on the boards of functional organizations, which the Government considers to be partners (trade unions, organized business, etc.). There are no data or information available on the causes of this under-representation.

Dismissal

The right to retain one's job is not explicitly regulated in the labour laws. It could, however, be deduced from the provisions with regard to dismissal. Article 27 Paragraph 1 sub b of the Constitution obliges the State to prohibit dismissal without grounds or on political or ideological grounds, for men and women. Pursuant to Article 2 of the Dismissal Permission Decree (Bulletin of Acts and Decrees1983 No. 10, as amended in Bulletin 1984 No. 102), an employer may not sever employment without permission obtained by the Minister of Labour. Dismissal without the required permission is invalid, pursuant to Article 7. A positive aspect of this decree is that, since its introduction, dismissal no longer is an arbitrary act of the employer.

Vocational Training

Article 27 Paragraph 1 sub d of the Constitution stipulates that the State is obliged to promote vocational training of employees. This applies to women as well as men. Pursuant to Article 53 of the Personnel Act, public servants have the possibility of applying for study leave. However, the State Decree that must regulate this leave, was never issued, so that this provision is not implemented. In practice, the Government and private employers do not restrict participation of men or women in vocational training courses that would benefit the job. Restrictions are generally for training courses during working hours, which do not directly relate to the job.

[17] *Report of Study of Vacancies*. Ministry of Labour, 1992.

Article 11, Paragraph 1 sub d

(d) The right to equal remuneration, including benefits, and to equal treatment in respect of work of equal value, as well as equality of treatment in the evaluation of the quality of work;

Article 28 sub a of the Constitution states: "All employees, irrespective of age, sex, race, nationality, religious or political conviction, have the right to remuneration for their work according to quantity, type, quality, and experience, on the basis of the principle of equal pay for equal work." There are no specific provisions in the Civil Code, the Labour Act, and the Personnel Act with regard to equal pay for male and female employees. In Suriname, no nation-wide systematic study has recently been performed with regard to wage structure. High priority should be given to such a study. In practice, women generally earn less than men, because they generally belong to the lower wage groups. In Government, women roughly make up 54% of those in the lower ranks, as opposed to 36% in higher ranks (source: CEBUMA, 1999).

With regard to the Wage Tax Act (Bulletin of Acts and Decrees 1981 No. 181, as amended inBulletin 1995 No. 51), the distinction between men and women was abolished as of 1 January, 1993, which made only married men eligible for a fixed deduction of 10%.

The Travel and Temporary Attachment Decree (Bulletin of Acts and Decrees 1944 No. 84, as amended in Bulletiin 1993 No. 8) contains discriminatory provisions with regard to women. This decree does not apply to family member of a female civil servant, since it mentions only the lawful family of a male civil servant (Article 4). Lawful family is considered to be the wife and the minor and legitimate children of the civil servant or his wife. As a result of this provision is, among other things, moving expenses for family members of the female civil servant are not reimbursed. Nor is there any reimbursement of expenses for the man with whom the female civil servant lives, or the acknowledged children born from such cohabitation, as the relevant provision is based on a married family.

Article 11, Paragraph 1 sub e

(e) The right to social security, particularly in cases of retirement, unemployment, sickness, invalidity and old age and other incapacity to work, as well as the right to paid leave;

Pensions and Pension Schemes

Civil servants and many employees in active service pay a certain percentage of their wages into a pension fund, which entitles them to pension when they have reached retirement age at 60. Only a very limited number of employees in the private sector takes part in pension schemes[18]. Retired civil servants generally are in a much more favorable position compared to retirees in the private sector. The self-employed (in the formal and informal sectors) generally do not have pension schemes. In view of increasing inflation, however, pensions have now devalued.

There is a limitation in the Personnel Act for married women, but it is not implemented in practice. The limitation refers to employees who have been emplopyed on the basis of a contract and who do not have pension rights. This group, however, does receive financial support from the Government.

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[18] Actuarial Bureau Lo Fo Wong, *Feasibility Study for National Basic Pensionfund, Report AB 98-376.* Paramaribo, December 1998

Up to 1977, widowers of female civil servants were not eligible for widower's pension in accordance with the Civil Servants Pension Act. In 1977 (Bulletin of Acts and Decrees 1977 No. 25) a new Article 36a was inserted, allowing for widower's pensions as of 1 January, 1977.

Payment in accordance with the General Pension Fund Act (Bulletin of Acts and Decrees 1981 No. 30, as amended in Bulletin 1995 No. 13) is not on the basis of gender but on the basis of age (60 years) and residence (Article 2). There are no legal provisions with regard to unemployment.

Unemployment

In case of unemployment, citizens have the right to medical assistance and financial support from the Government, in accordance with the criteria tandards of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Public Housing. Suriname has no unemployment benefit system as a form of social security. In some cases, employees from the private sector receive a single allowance in case of lay-offs, sometimes with temporary continuation of certain provisions. Poorer people, among whom the unemployed, are eligible for a medical assistance card and financial support from the Ministry of Social Affairs and Housing. About 60% of those registered for medical assistance and financial support are female (see Table 11.9).

Maternity Arrangements

According to Article 35 Paragraph 6 of the Constitution, working women have the right to paid maternity leave. In the Exemption Decree of the Government, the maternity period has been set at 12 weeks, six weeks before and six weeks after the expected date of delivery. Costs of delivery for civil servants are covered by the State Health Service. In private enterprise, companies with a Collective Labour Agreement have the same arrangements as the Government, with the exception of a number of Collective Labour Agreements, mainly with the large companies, in which it is laid down that the woman determines, in consultation with a physician, the manner in which she will take maternity leave before and after delivery. In practice, people generally work up to two weeks prior to the expected date of delivery. Most companies, therefore, cover the expenses of delivery, either completely or in part. Problems occur only in those companies who have no Collective Labour Agreement, such as shops and in private households (cleaning women). The Regional Health Services have a period of 16 weeks, whereby the woman can work up to a maximum of 4 weeks prior to the date of delivery.

In 1983, the Council of Ministers adopted a decree to amend the Labour Act of 1963, to regulate maternity leave for women workers in the private sector. Legislation on this issue was not carried through, however. This was because of the passage: "whether or not working in an enterprise ". According to this passage, implementation of the regulation would also cover people performing personal services in private households. This would lead to undesired situations, in which young women, who already have difficulty entering the labor market and surviving there, would be maneuvered into a more unfavorable position. Especially in times of economic recession, private households and small businesses would not be able to withstand the pressure to avoid employing female personnel[19].

In 1994, the multidisciplinary working group "Paid Maternity Leave" composed a draft proposal for new general statutory regulations, which would enable women to combine motherhood with working outside the home. One of the proposals was to grant paid special leave, for a period of 14 weeks (six weeks before and eight weeks after delivery), on the condition that this period would have no bearing on claims for annual vacation leave. It was also included that in case of

[19] Ministry of Labour, Background Information for Financing Paid Maternity Leave / Breastfeeding. December 1993.

pregnancy of a female employee, the employer should take into consideration her condition when deploying her in the labor process[20].

Sickness and Disability

There are provisions in the Personnel Act with regard to free medical treatment for civil servants and their family members, including dental, optimetrical and obstetric assistance (Article 33). The civil servant is furthermore eligible to free medical care in case of sickness or disability arising during service (Article 35 Paragraph 1 sub b).

The Disability Act (Bulletin of Acts and Decrees 1947, as amended in Bulletin 1983 No. 8) is applicable to enterpises and proceeds from the concept of the employee, which is in principle understood to mean both female and male employees. In accordance with Article 4 of the Disability Act, the employer is obliged to compensate the employee for accidents occurred during service, and to compensate the surviving relatives of the employee in case of death. Included in the compensation are, among other things, medical treatment, and allowances in case of full or partial disablement.

From the stipulation (Article 6 Paragraph 3) of the Surinamese Disability Regulations (SOR), in which the concept of "surviving relatives of the employee" is defined, it is apparent that men and women are not treated equally. The law proceeds from the man as the sole breadwinner and the woman as a housewife. The wife of a male employee is eligible for a allowance, while the husband/ partner of the female employee is not eligible if this stipulation is implemented strictly. The partner of the male employee is eligible if she has children acknowledged by him. The Civil Servants' Disability Regulation, Bulletin of Acts and Decrees 1995 No. 24, does take concubinage into account.

Persons in Government service have the right to medical treatment (including obstetric assistance) via the State Health Service (SZF), with coverage extending to family members. The SZF arrangement is compulsory for all civil servants, who pay a monthly contribution of 4% of their gross income. Besides this arrangement, the SZF has a category of privately insured persons. Within this last category, a distinction is made between insured groups of persons (company coverage) and insured individuals (personal coverage). See Table 11.8.
The unemployed partner (under 60 years of age) of a woman cannot be not co-insured according to the SZF, unless he has been declared unfit for work.

In the private sector, in particular in companies with a Collective Labour Agreement, employees also have the right to free medical treatment.

Paid Leave

A civil servant has the right to fully paid annual holiday leave, pursuant to Article 47 Paragraph 1 of the Personnel Act, and also has the right to annual vacation allowance (Article 51). Furthermore, in accordance with Article 2 of the Holiday Act of 1975 (Bulletin of Acts and Decrees 1975 No. 164 c) the employer is obliged to grant an annual holiday leave to his employees. The employee has the right and also the obligation to enjoy an annual leave. However, in accordance with Article 8 Paragraph 2 of the Holiday Act, the employer has the legal right, in case of maternity leave, to decrease the number of vacation days during the year in which maternity leave is enjoyed. In practice, balancing holiday leave with maternity leave is seldom applied. Moreover, Collective Labour Agreements often deviate from Article 8 Paragraph 2.

[20] Interim Report of the Multidisciplinary Working Group "Paid Maternity Leave, July 1994

Holiday leave is enjoyed with full pay, and during such leave the employer is obliged to pay the employee a holidayallowance besides wages (Articles 7 Paragraph 2 and 10 Paragraph 1 V.W.). The Collective Labor Agreements do not make a distincyion between male and female employees with regard to holiday arrangements, either.

There are no data available on the number of men and women in temporary and permanent employment, or with respect to home workers in general, and female home workers in particular. Household work is not included in the labour statistics as work.

Article 11, Paragraph 1 sub f

(f) The right to protection of health and to safety in working conditions, including the safeguarding of the function of reproduction.

In Article 28 sub c, the Constitution stipulates that all employees, regardless of sex, have the right to healthy and safe working conditions. Furthermore, pursuant to Article 29 sub b of the Constitution, the State is obliged to create conditions for special protection of women on the job during and after pregnancy, who are involved in activities that require special effort or who work in unhealthy or dangerous conditions.

In the Safety Act (Bulletin of Acts and Decrees 1947, as amended in Bulletin 1980 No. 116 and Article 1614x of the Civil Code) there are general provisions on safety which apply to employees of both sexes (Article 1 sub c). There is an additional provision on the protection of pregnant women and lactating women against radiation (Bulletin of Acts and Decrees 1981 No. 73; Safety Regulation No. 8; as implementation of Article 3 Paragraph 1 of the Safety Act (Bulletin of Acts and Decrees 1947 No. 142)): "During her pregnancy and the period during which she breastfeeds, a woman may not perform work whereby she is exposed to heightened radiation." The Government has set up an inspection system, namely the Labor Inspection Service, but inspection of the civil service is not part of its tasks.

Except for one, the Collective Labour Agreements do not contain provisions relating to protection of motherhood and there are no prohibitions on heavy and dangerous work for pregnant and lactating women. The Diakonessenhuis, a private hospital, the Regional Health Services, all institutions of public health, and all companies with a Collective Labour Agreement have favourable Collective Labour Agreements that prohibit inregular service after the 28th week of pregnancy (Collective Labour Agreement, Article 95.5).

Article 11, Paragraph 2

In order to prevent discrimination against women on the grounds of marriage or maternity and to ensure their effective right to work, States Parties shall take appropriate measures:

Article 11, Paragraph 2 sub a

(a) To prohibit, subject to the imposition of sanctions, dismissal on the grounds of pregnancy or of maternity leave and discrimination in dismissals on the basis of marital status;

Article 35 Paragraph 5 of the Constitution explicitly states the following: "The State recognizes the exceptional importance of motherhood". Following from this stipulation, the right to paid maternity leave is recognized in Article 35 Paragraph 6.

But Article 69 Paragraph 3 of the Personnel Act states: "By state decree it is possible to provide for dismissal of a female civil servant for entering into marriage."
The Labor Act and the Civil Code do not have any provisions relating to dismissal on the grounds of pregnancy, childbirth and marriage with regard to employees in the private sector. Article 11615s Paragraph 2 "probably unreasonable dismissal" provides a pregnant woman with the possibility of redress if she was unfairly dismissed because of pregnancy. It must be noted that in practise the legislation on the issue is not applied.

Article 11, Paragraph 2 sub b

(b) To introduce maternity leave with pay or with comparable social benefits without loss of former employment, seniority or social allowances;

The Constitution recognizes the right of working women to paid maternity leave (Article 35 Paagraph 6). For female civil servants this provision is detailed further in the Personnel Act (Article 45 Paragraphs 1 and 4) and the Exemption Decree (Article 1), and for the various enterprises in Collective Labour Agreements. Female civil servants are eligible for paid maternity leave. But there is a provision in the Personnel Act (Bulletin of Acts and Decrees 1965 No. 195, as amended in Bulletin 1987 No. 93) on pregnancy and childbirth, by which female civil servants are eligible to exemption of service during the time they are not able to work because of pregnancy or childbirth. It is also stipulated that in principle there is no right to salary in case of exemption of service in case of pregnancy or childbirth (Article 54 Paragraph 4). This discrimination with regard to women was abolished in the Exemption Decree (Bulletin of Acts and Decrees 1990 No. 36), since this Decree lays down that exemption of service owing to pregnancy and childbirth must be with retention of pay (Article 1 Paragraph 4). Even so, this state decree contains a number of restrictive provisions. If the period for childbirth is exceeded, this is balanced with outstanding leave or leave without cost for the State, which has financial consequences, in the sense that this form of leave is unpaid. Furthermore, exemption of service owing to pregnancy and childbirth results in loss of seniority, as active service is interrupted (Article 47 Paragraph 9 Civil Service Act). This stipulation may be considered as a penalization of the female civil servants for their reproductive function.

With regard to the private sector, the right to paid maternity leave is only regulated in the Collective Labour Agreements of middle-sized and large companies. The expenses of delivery are generally paid, because these are considered medical expenses. The many women who work in the informal sector are not covered by any arrangements for materinity leave.

Article 11, Paragraph 2 sub c

(c) To encourage the provision of the necessary supporting social services to enable parents to combine family obligations with work responsibilities and participation in public life, in particular through promoting the establishment and development of a network of child-care facilities;

By providing daycare for young children, one enables parents to perform paid labor. There is daycare for children of working parents in nursery schools, crèches and child-care centres. Most of these institutions are open to children up to the age of six years. Suriname has 19

Government child-care centers in Greater Paramaribo, an unknown number of private child-care centers and nursery schools, as well as two company child-care facilities, one in the Diakonessenhuis and the Academic Hospital. Child-care in the districts and in the interior occurs within a personal network.

There is as yet no legislation with regard to child-care facilities, so the quality of services can neither be guaranteed nor inspected. The Ministry of Social Affairs and Housing, which is responsible for child-care facilities, has drafted a Chil-Care Act, to be submitted to the Council of Ministers for approval. This Ministry also aims at increasing the number of, and improving the geographical distribution of child-carefacilities.

In Suriname, there are no regulations enabling working parents to leave their work if their children would need them. Nor are there regulations or provisions to offer male and female employees the possibility of flexible working hours, so that they can combine their work responsibilities and family obligations. There are no after-school facilities for school-going children of working parents, nor are there provisions for lactating mothers to breastfeed during working hours. Some employers are said to provide child allowance for pre-schoolers, but there was no information available on this.

Article 11, Paragraph 2 sub d

(d) To provide special protection to women during pregnancy in types of work proved to be harmful to them

In accordance with the Constitution, the State is obliged to offer special protection to women during and after pregnancy, who perform activities which require special effort, or to women who work in unhealthy or dangerous circumstances (see also the discussion of Article 11 Paragraph 1f of the Convention).

Article 11, Paragraph 3

Protective legislation relating to matters covered in this article shall be reviewed periodically in the light of scientific and technological knowledge and shall be revised, repealed or extended as necessary.

There are protective laws, the implementation of which leaves much to be desired. Periodic evalutation of the legislation in general, followed by possible adjustment on the basis of the results of studies, occurs only to a very limited extent. The possibilities of revising, repealing, or extending legislation are furthermore minimal, due to a shortage of legislative lawyers in Suriname. Moreover, few studies are carried out and international developments are not followed closely either.

Table 11.1: Unemployment Rate (Definition ILO) in Districts of Paramaribo and Wanica, 1993 – First Half of 1997[21]

	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997 (1st half)
Gender	%	%	%	%	%
Men	11.3	11.1	7.0	7.9	7.4
Women	18.9	14.9	10.9	16.4	14.3
Total	14.0	12.4	8.4	10.9	9.8

Source: *Households in Suriname 1993-1997*, General Bureau of Statistics, Department of Household Statistics, May 1998

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[21] Owing Under to the broad definition of unemployment, figures for period 1993-1997 are respectively 19%, 19%, 16%, 19% and 17% (men and women).

$$\text{Unemployment Rate} = \frac{\text{Total Unemployed}}{\text{Unemployed + Employed}} \times 100$$

Unemployment in Broad Sense:

$$\text{Unemployment Rate} = \frac{\text{Total Unemployed in Broad Sense}}{\text{Unemployed in Broad Sense + Employed}} \times 100$$

Unemployed:
Persons in the economically active age group, who were not employed during the reference period of the survey, and who have tried to gain employment with a third party, or have tried to achieve economic activity on their own (ICLS definition)

Unemployed in Broad Sense (ABS definition):
1. the unemployed as defined by the ICLS, and
2. persons in the category of 'discouraged workers' / persons not actively seeking employment (persons in the economically active age group who have indicated that they are seeking employment, but who have not made any concrete attempts during the reference period of the survey to gain employment with a third party, or to achieve economic activity on their own), and
3. persons 'available, but not seeking employment' (persons who were classified as 'economically inactive' for the reference period of the survey because they answered negatively to the question whether they were seeking employment, but who should be expected, based on prevailing standards, to be seeking employment, mainly because they are available for employment).

Source: *Huishoudens in Suriname 1993-1997, Suriname in Cijfer nr. 181, 1998/01, Algemeen Bureau voor de Statistiek, Afdeling Huishoudelijkonderzoeken, mei 1998* (Households in Suriname 1993-1997, Suriname in Figures no. 181, 1998/01, General Bureau of Statistics, Department of Household Surveys, May 1998), pp. 10 and 12.

Table 11.2: Employed Population in Households in Paramaribo and Wanica according to Age and Gender, 1992 through First Quarter 1997

Age Group	1994			1995		
	Male	Female (%)	Total(%)	Male	Female (%)	Total (%)
15-19	1797	402 (18)	2199 (100)	1791	545 (23)	2336 (100)
20-24	6921	2638 (28)	9559 (100)	6467	3395 (34)	9862 (100)
25-29	8864	3773 (30)	12637 (100)	10873	4740 (30)	15613 (100)
30-34	8060	4639 (37)	12699 (100)	9222	4164 (31)	13386 (100)
35-39	7843	4592 (37)	12435 (100)	7566	4696 (38)	12262 (100)
40-44	5706	3473 (38)	9179 (100)	5414	3212 (37)	8626 (100)
45-49	4511	2611 (37)	7122 (100)	5110	3559 (41)	8669 (100)
50-54	3522	2362 (41)	5884 (100)	4426	2181 (33)	6607 (100)
55-59	3012	1545 (34)	4557 (100)	2749	1212 (31)	3961 (100)
60-65	1210	235 (16)	1445 (100)	725	193 (21)	918 (100)
Unknown	231	0 (0)	231 (100)	48	164 (77)	212 (100)
Total	51677	26269	77946	54931	28061	82452
(%)	66%	34%	100%	66%	34%	100%

Table 11.2, continued

Age Group	1996			1stquarter 1997		
	Male	Female (%)	Tota (%)	Male	Female (%)	Total(%)
15-19	1740	515 (29)	2255 (100)	1829	262 (13)	2091 (100)
20-24	7890	3172 (29)	11062 (100)	7322	3524 (32)	10846 (100)
25-29	11256	5634 (33)	16890 (100)	10464	6150 (37)	16614 (100)
30-34	9209	4796 (34)	14005 (100)	7992	4716 (37)	12708 (100)
35-39	7938	4269 (35)	12207 (100)	8387	3893 (32)	12280 (100)
40-44	6430	3302 (34)	9732 (100)	6098	2211 (27)	8309 (100)
45-49	4829	2910 (38)	7739 (100)	5366	3001 (36)	8367 (100)
50-54	3625	2357 (39)	5982 (100)	3263	2479 (43)	5742 (100)
55-59	3746	2063 (36)	5809 (100)	3524	1956 (36)	5480 (100)
60-65	1166	288 (20)	1454 (100)	1702	128 (7)	1830 (100)
Unknown	0	75 (100)	75 (100)	134	0 (0)	134 (100)
Total	57829	29380	87209	56087	28325	84412
(%)	66%	34%	100%	66%	34%	100%

Source: General Bureau of Statistics, 1998

Table 11.3: Population in Households in Paramaribo and Wanica according to Activity, 1994 - First Quarter of 1997

Status	1994			1995		
	Male (%)	Female (%)	Total(%)	Male (%)	Female (%)	Total(%)
1. Economically Active						
Employed	52071 (66.4)	26423 (33.6)	78494 (100)	54535 (65.9)	28262 (34.1)	82797 (100)
Unemployed	6421 (58.1)	4626 (41.9)	11047 (100)	4124 (54.6)	3435 (45.4)	7559 (100)
2. Not Economically Active						
Homemaker	0 (0)	43247 (100)	43247 (100)	0 (0)	44310 (100)	44310 (100)
Student	20684 (48.3)	22129 (51.7)	42813 (100)	24542 (51.4)	23173 (48.6)	47715 (100)
Other	17876 (80.8)	4254 (19.2)	22130 (100)	17118 (74.7)	5799 (25.3)	22917 (100)
3. Status Unknown	34039 (52.2)	31158 (47.8)	65217 (100)	32638 (49.8)	32925 (50.2)	65563 (100)
Total	131111 (46.9)	131837 (53.1)	262948 (100)	132957 (49.1)	137903 (50.9)	270860 (100)

Table 11.3, continued

Status	1996			1st Quarter 1997		
	Male	Female (%)	Total	Male	Female (%)	Total
1. Economically Active						
Employed	38208 (66.5)	29380 (33.5)	87588	56611	28454 (33.4)	85065 (100)
Unemployed	4940 (46.2)	5759 (53.8)	10699	4598	4732 (50.7)	9330 (100)
2. Not Economically Active						
Homemaker	0 (0)	42380 (100)	42380 (100)	0 (0)	44911 (100)	44911 (100)
Student	16832 (44.3)	21184 (55.7)	38016 (100)	23068 (54.5)	19254 (45.5)	42322 (100)
Other	17430 (74.5)	5953 (25.5)	23383 (100)	20794 (80.7)	4939 (19.3)	25753 (100)
3. Status Unknown	32667 (49.6)	33159 (50.4)	65826 (100)	25842 (49.3)	26538 (50.7)	52380 (100)
Total	130077 (48.6)	137803 (51.4)	267890 (100)	130913 (50.4)	128848 (49.6)	259761 (100)

Source: General Bureau of Statistics, Department of Household Statistics, 1998

Table 11.4: Employed Population in Households in Paramaribo and Wanica according to Working Hours and Gender, 1994 through First Quarter of 1997

Working Hours	1994			1995		
	Male (%)	Female (%)	Total (%)	Male (%)	Female (%)	Total (%)
Full-Time	47650 (67)	23693 (33)	71343 (100)	51032 (67)	25237 (33)	76269 (100)
Part-Time	2751 (53)	2462 (47)	5213 (100)	2373 (49)	2516 (51)	4889 (100)
Hours Unknown	1276 (92)	114 (8)	1390 (100)	986 (76)	308 (24)	1294 (100)
Total	51677 (66)	26269 (34)	77946 (100)	54391 (66)	28061 (34)	82452 (100)

Table 11.4, continued

Working Hours	1996			1st Quarter 1997		
	Male	Female (%)	Total	Male	Female (%)	Total
Full-Time	54514 (67)	27030 (33)	81544 (100)	52063 (67)	25971 (33)	78034 (100)
Part-Time	2223 (50)	2221 (50)	4444 (100)	3366 (60)	2220 (40)	5586 (100)
Hours Unknown	1092 (89)	129 (11)	12210 (100)	658 (83)	134 (17)	792 (100)
Total	57829 (66)	29380 (34)	87209 (100)	56087 (66)	28325 (34)	84412 (100)

Source: General Bureau of Statistics, 1998

Table 11.5: Employed Population in Households in Districts of Paramaribo and Wanica, Gender-Specific According to Sideline Activities, 1993 to First Half of 1997

Activity	1993			1994			1995		
	Male (%)	Female (%)	Total (%)	Male (%)	Female (%)	Total (%)	Male (%)	Female (%)	Total (%)
Main Activity Only	50423 (65.6)	26410 (34.4)	76833 (100)	49940 (66.4)	25321 (33.6)	75261 (100)	51775 (65.5)	27282 (34.5)	79057 (100)
Main Activity+ Sideline	1241 (62.3)	750 (37.7)	1991 (100)	1097 (59.4)	750 (40.6)	1847 (100)	2266 (74.4)	779 (25.6)	3045 (100)
Does not Know	208 (66.7)	104 (33.3)	312 (100)	640 (76.4)	198 (23.6)	838 (100)	350 (100)	0 (0)	350 (100)
Total	51872 (65.5)	27264 (34.5)	79136 (100)	51677 (66.3)	26269 (33.7)	77946 (100)	54391 (66.0)	28061 (34.0)	82452 (100)

Table 11.5, continued

Activity	1996			1st half 1997		
	Male (%)	Female (%)	Total (%)	Male (%)	Female (%)	Total (%)
Main Activity Only	56011 (66.1)	28755 (33.9)	84766 (100)	53186 (65.9)	27523 (34.1)	80709 (100)
Main + Sideline Activity	1666 (72.7)	625 (27.3)	2291 (100)	1836 (77.6)	529 (22.4)	2365 (100)
Does not Know	152 (100)	0 (0)	152 (100)	1059 (79.8)	268 (20.2)	1327 (100)
Total	57829 (66.3)	29380 (33.7)	87209 (100)	56081 (66.4)	28320 (33.6)	84401 (100)

Source: *Households in Suriname 1993-1997*, General Bureau of Statistics, Department of Household Statistics, May 1998

Table 11.6: Employed Population in Households in Districts of Paramaribo and Wanica, according to Main Activities and Gender, 1993-1996

Occupational Group in Main Activity	1993			1994		
	Male	Female (%)	Total (%)	Male	Female (%)	Total (%)
Academic and Other Specialists	2915	2012	4928	2416	2555	4971
	(59.2)	(40.8)	(100)	(48.6)	(51.4)	(100)
Self-Employed, Teachers,	2211	5535	7745	1773	4295	6068
Trainers, Artistes, Specialists	(28.5)	(71.5)	(100)	(29.2)	(70.8)	(100)
Policymakers and High-Level	1633	263	1896	1392	204	1596
Managers	(86.1)	(13.9)	(100)	(87.2)	(12.8)	(100)
White-Collar Workers	5540	6143	11683	5874	8082	13956
	(47.4)	(52.6)	(100)	(42.1)	(57.9)	(100)
Commercial Sector	4746	3394	8139	4570	2422	6991
	(58.3)	(41.7)	(100)	(65.4)	(34.6)	(100)
Service Sector	5320	6840	12160	4910	6479	11389
	(43.7)	(56.3)	(100)	(43.1)	(56.9)	(100)
Agricultural Sector	3921	548	4469	4372	325	4697
	(87.7)	(12.3)	(100)	(93.1)	(6.9)	(100)
Crafts, Industry, Transport and	23415	2216	25631	23858	1627	25484
Related Sectors	(91.4)	(8.6)	(100%)	(93.6)	(6.4)	(100)
Unidentifiable and Incompletely	2172	313	2487	2514	280	2794
Described Jobs	(887.4)	(12.6)	(100)	(90)	(10.0)	(100)
Total	51872	27264	79139	51677	26269	77946
	(65.5)	(34.5)	(100)	(66.3)	(33.7)	(100)

Table 11.6, continued

Occupational Group in Main Activity	1995			1996		
	Man	Vrouw	Totaal	Man	Vrouw	Totaal
Academic and Other Specialists	2806	2684	5490	1118	2290	3408
	(51.1)	(48.9)	(100)	(32.8)	(67.2)	(100)
Self-Employed, Teachers,	2360	4479	6839	1671	3902	5573
Trainers, Artistes, Specialists	(34.5)	(65.5)	(100)	(30.0)	(70.0)	(100)
Policymakers and High-Level	1736	197	1933	2051	317	2368
Managers	(89.8)	(10.2)	(100)	(86.6)	(13.4)	(100)
White-Collar Workers	6044	6961	13005	6297	8087	14384
	(46.5)	(53.5)	(100)	(43.8)	(56.2)	(100)
Commercial Sector	3958	2893	6851	4247	3738	7985
	(57.8)	(42.2)	(100)	(53.2)	(46.8)	(100)
Service Sector	5110	7817	12927	5796	8659	14455
	(39.5)	(60.5)	(100)	(40.1)	(59.9)	(100)
Agricultural Sector	4759	553	5312	5014	527	5541
	(89.6)	(10.4)	(100)	(90.5)	(9.5)	(100)
Crafts, Industry, Transport and	26341	2117	28458	29295	1587	30882
Related Sectors	(92.6)	(7.4)	(100)	(94.9)	(5.1)	(100)
Unidentifiable and Incompletely	1277	360	1637	2340	273	2613
Described Jobs	(78.0)	(22.0)	(100)	(89.6)	(10.4)	(100)
Total	54391	28061 (34.0)	82452	57829	29380 (33.7)	87209
	(66.0)		(100)	(66.3)		(100)

* International Standard Classification of Occupations – '68

Source: *Households in Suriname 1993-1997*, General Bureau of Statistics, Department of Household Statistics

Table 11.7a: Civil Service Pension Claimants according to Category and Gender, 1997 and 1998

	1997			1998		
Claimants	Male (%)	Vrouw (%)	Total (%)	Male (%)	Female (%)	Total (%)
Widows	Not Appl. (0)	3174 (100)	3174 (100)	Not Appl. (0)	3664 (100)	3664 (100)
Widowers	1927 (100)	Not Appl. (0)	1927 (100)	332 (100)	Not Appl. (0)	332 (100)
Pensioners	7479 (73.4)	2708 (26.6)	10187 (100)	7657	2798	10455 (100)
Early Pensioners	5558 (57.8)	4061 (42.2)	9619 (100)	5158	3661	8819 (100)
Total	14964 (60.1)	9943 (39.9)	24907 (100)	13147 (56.5)	10123 (43.5)	23270 (100)

Source: *Stichting Pensioenfonds*, 1999

Table 11.7b: Pensioners (Retirees) and People Entitled to Pension (68 of 84 Known Pension Funds) in the Private Sector

Type of Pension	Number
Old Age Pension:	
Men	2953
Women	328
Total Old Age Pension	3281
Widows'/Widowers' Pension	1119
General Total	4400

Source: Actuarial Bureau Lo Fo Wong, *Feasibility Study for National Basic Pensionfund, Report AB 98-376.* Paramaribo, December 1998

Table 11.8: Number of Principally Insured in State Health Service according to Category and Gender (1998)

Category	Male (%)	Female (%)	Total (%)
Compulsory Insured	20330 (47.2)	22768 (52.8)	43098 (100)
Group Voluntarily Insured	1804 (66.9)	891 (33.1)	2695 (100)
Individual Voluntarily Insured	1840 (65.5)	969 (34.5)	2809 (100)

Source: State Health Service, 1999

Health

Article 12, Paragraph 1

States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in the field of health care in order to ensure, on a basis of equality of men and women, access to health care services, including those related to family planning.

The right to health is one of the basic rights, pursuant to Article 36 of the Constitution. The State must promote general health care by improving living and working conditions and by education aimed at the protection of health. The State must also create conditions for optimal satisfication of the basic need for, among other things, health care (Article 24). The Ministry of Health is responsible for the policy on health care. Suriname has always had a reasonably well-developed public health system, with an extensive network of intramural and extramural services. In the field of prevention and curative care, the system provides various forms of specialist care. However, since the early nineteen nineties a reduction can be noticed in the access to medical facilities, and recently the availibility of certain medical services has also become threatened. Access is particularly a problem for those in the State Health Service, as they must pay a substantial own contribution for consultations, hospitalization, and medication, besides the premium owed. Those eligible for a medical care card, who used to enjoy completely free medical care, must now also pay a contribution. The specific services for women are becoming limited as well. This is particularly the case in the interior, where mainly women and children reside, who often lack medical care. The Government is no longer capable of performing its responsibiity towards its citizens in accordance with Article 24 of the Constitution, owing to a lack of finances and humanpower (with regard to quality as well as quantity). Table 12.1 shows the decreasing budget of the Ministry of Health. Reliable data on the health care crisis are not available. In the general part of the present report, life expectancy, birth and mortality rates have already been given.

With regard to health insurance in Suriname, there are the State Health Service (SZF) and group insurances. Those in need are eligible for medical assistance through the Ministry of Social Affairs and Housing. Roughly 80% of the Surinamese people are covered by the State Health Service, group insurances or via the Ministry of Social Affairs and Public Housing. About 20% pay their own medical expenses. Half of those in the State Health Service are women, while about 60% of those with a Medical Assistance Cardissued by the Minsitry of Social Affairs and Public Housing are women.

As far as the health care of civil servants is concerned, the State Health Service Decree (Bulletin of Acts and Decrees 1980 No. 120) regulates medical treatment for civil servants, retired civil servants, and their family members (Article 12). Civil servants enjoy free medical treatment, which includes obstetric care (Article 33 P.W.). Family members are co-insured under certain conditions:

- If the wife is the principal insured party, then her husband will not be automatically co-insured. If he is unemployed, fit for work, and not yet 60 years of age, he cannot be co-insured as a family member with the State Health Service. He then has to become a voluntarily insured person with the State Health Service.
- If the man is the principal insured party, there is positive discrimination in favor of the wife. Young wives without an income are co-insured for a maximum of two years. Generally, the regulation contains no age limit for the woman, however. The relevant partner with whom man or woman lives, and children who have not been acknowledged by the father, are not considered as family members.

Proposals have already been formulated to alter the above-mentioned limitations. Anticipating amendments of the law and the articles of association, the State Health Service extended the category of family members, whereby the partner out of wedlock may also be co-insured if both partners have been registered in the Register of Births, Deaths and Marriages for two years at the same address. In principle, children who have not been acknowledged by the father are not co-insured, but this may be decided per case. One possibility is to categorize the child as a "foster child". The above-mentioned conditions also apply to (private) employees insured with the State Health Service.

Table 12.1: Budget of Ministry of Health (× Sf. 1 Million), 1994-1999

	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998
Budget of Ministry	430.7	2,534.7	3,250.7	2,796.6	5,633.7
% National Budget	4	4	8.6	2.7	1.7

Source: Ministry of Finance, 1999

Reproductive Health

According to the Penal Code, abortion is a punishable act (Articles 309, 355-358). Punishable are, among others, women who intentionally cause the abortion or death of their fetus, and the persons who intentionally causes the abortion or death of a woman's fetus, with or without her permission. A blind eye is turned to abortion in Suriname, and it is generally performed safely. There are no data available on complications owing to abortion

There is no law that prescribes family planning. Persons who "display contraceptives for the prevention of pregnancy, and offer contraceptives and contraceptive services and publication for the prevention of pregnancy" (Articles 533 and 534) are punishable. However, the provisions of this law are not applied. The Lobi Foundation carries out activities in the area of family planning and sex education, despite the fact that there are penalizing provisions in the Criminal Code of Suriname. The organization is an NGO, which has been providing assistance and giving education in the area of sexual and reproductive health, including family planning, since 1968. It has clinics in Paramaribo and Nieuw-Nickerie, and by the end of 1995, had extended its activities to Moengo in the District of Marowijne. The organization was officially recognized by the Ministry of Health in 1982 as an organization for primary health care.

Contraceptives and prophylactics are available nation-wide in Suriname, sometimes requiring a medical prescription. Distribution in the districts and the interior is handled by, in particular, the Regional Health Services and the Medical Mission. As of 1994, there is a special financial arrangement for persons with a Medical Assistance Card issued by the Ministry of Social Affairs, and this Ministry bears part of the expenses of assistance provided by Lobi.
Data from the Lobi Foundation show that oral contraceptives (the pill) are the most used family planning method. In 1998, oral contraceptives formed 80% of the total number of contraceptives issued[22]. Contraceptive injections made up 14%, IUDs 2%, while condom use was 3% of the total in 1998. This picture differs little from previous years.
The age distribution of women using contraceptives shows that the highest use is among 20-29 year olds (50%). According to Suriname law, a married woman does not require her husband's permission to make useof health care or family planning facilities. A nation-wide study by Lobi in

[22] *Stichting Lobi* 1999

1992 showed that about 48% of women of child-bearing age used contraceptives. Of these, 36% took the decision by themselves, and 52% decided by mutual agreement with their partner. In only about 8% of cases did the men decide. Recent data are not available as yet. Nor are there data available that could provide information on cultural obstacles which women face when they wish to make use of healthcare or family planning facilities

Sterilization is allowed in Suriname. Gender-specific data on sterilization are not available, although it is common knowledge that sterilization among men is almost nil.

STDs and HIV/AIDS

Until 1996, activities in the field of policy, research, education, control, etc. with regard to HIV/AIDS were coordinated by the National Aids Program (NAP) of the Ministry of Health. In 1996, the content and organization of the activities were changed in view of a reorientation. The institute was placed directly within the Dermatological Service of the Ministry of Health and partly because of this, activities in the field of sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) were integrated into the package of services. The name of the programme was changed to the National STD/HIV Programme.

Various activities in the framework of STD/HIV prevention for women are funded from regular budgets and with money from foreign donors. These activities include research, workshops, group discussions, educational meetings, radio and television programs, seminars and such at local, regional and national levels.
The following institutes are involved in the execution of the SID/HIV Programme:

- *Lobi Foundation*: testing, sex education and condom distribution. The target group is mainly women.
- *PEPSUR Foundation*: peer education and peer educator training.
- *Mamio Namen Project* (the Patchwork Names Project): psycho-social counselling of HIV-positive people and contacts. Also education of contacts and relatives of HIV-positive people.
- *Maxi Linder Foundation*: peer education (female sex workers), testing of sex workers and condom distribution.
- Medical Mission: clinical management of STD/HIV, STD syndrom approach, education in the interior.
- Regional Health Service: clinical management of STD/HIV, STD syndrom approach, education.
- University of Suriname: training courses (operational research).
- Clinical Management, consisting of internists and general practitioners: fixing protocols, classification, hospital guidelines, list of drugs, etc.

Although no special measures have been taken to guarantee the participation of women as HIV/AIDS health workers, most activities are carried out by women, either with the Government or through NGOs involved in HIV/AIDS eradication.

In 1997, 26 AIDS patients were reported to have died. This number is only an indication, as not all deaths are reported. In 1996, 14 women and 15 men died of AIDS[23]. In the period 1984-1996, 963 HIV-positive peope were registered by the NAP. If the trend of the first trhee months of 1999 continues, there will be a considerable increase in 1999 compared to 1997 and 1998.
In 1997, 2128 people were tested for HIV, of which 182 were positive (9%). In 1998, 2405 people were tested, of which 184 were positive (8%), and in the first quarter of 1999, 565 people

[23] Kirsnadath, D. 1998

were tested, of which 48 were positive (8%). These figures are only indications, as not all cases were reported[24].

The majority of HIV sero-positives are young people between the ages of 15 and 29 years. Information from the Dermatological Service shows that more women than men are infected among the younger age groups. Girls are infected at a younger age than boys, probably because of the traditional age-difference between the sexes in relationships. Young women and female sex workers, particularly from weaker social backgrounds, form high-risk groups, which are thus also given high priority within policy. More than one of each five street sex workers turns out to be HIV sero-positive.

In the national program, special attention is given to pregnant women, as the (unborn) child of a pregnant woman has about 30% chance of becoming infected. In the execution of the national program, an attempt is made to have all pregnant women test for HIV as much as possible. The costs, however, amount to between US$ 8 and US$ 10 per test (including all additional costs). The whole treatment to reduce the chance of infection of the child, costs about US$ 500 per woman. Annually, about 6000 to 8000 women are pregnant in Suriname. In 1997, seven HIV-positive babies were registered, four in 1998 and seven in the first three months of 1999[25].

It is noteworthy that there is one HIV sero-positive woman who is quite open about it, and who is involved in the counselling of AIDS patients and HIV-positive people. She has been HIV sero-positive for 16 years and is one of the longest living people with the HIV virus.

Cervical Cancer

In 1997, *Stichting Lobi* was commissioned by the Ministry of Health to undertake a nation-wide study of cervical cancer. In the execution of this five-year project, women can be tested for cervical cancer free of charge. Up to June 1999, a total of 23,665 women in ten districts had been tested. This is about 38% of the estimated group. The target groups of *Stichting Lobi* are adults of reproductive age, with the focus on young people.

Article 12, Paragraph 2

Notwithstanding the provisions of paragraph 1 of this article, States Parties shall ensure to women appropriate services in connection with pregnancy, confinement and the post-natal period, granting free services where necessary, as well as adequate nutrition during pregnancy and lactation.

The extraordinary importance of motherhood is recognized in Article 35 Paragraph 5 of the Constitution. However, this recognition is not sufficiently reflected in national legislation, as has already been noted in the discussion of Article 11 of the Convention.

Free service, as stipulated in the Convention, has not existed in Suriname since the nineteen nineties. Most services offered within the framework of maternal and child care were virtually free of charge in the past, but as a result of Government policy, which changed under pressure of the economic recession, a contribution is required of patients. Even persons in the State Health Service, and those with a Medical Assistance Card issued by the Ministry of Social Affairs are now required to pay an 'own contribution'.

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[24] Ministry of Public Health, Dermatological Service, 1999

[25] See note 7

Pregnant women are discriminated by the State Health Service, for women are required to undergo a pregnancy test before registering with the Service. If they are pregnant, they are obliged to pay one year of premium in advance, or they will not be accepted in the Heakth Service.

Maternal and child care in Suriname has always been considered an important responsibility of the Ministry of Health. This is apparent from the long-established services for particularly pregnant women, mothers, and young children. The Bureau of Public Health prepares policy with regard to prenatal care, health centers, daycare centers and schoolchildren. Women can go to the polyclinics of the Regional Health Services for prenatal counselling, and after delivery they can receive guidance from the health centers in caring for their babies. Pregnant women can turn to the Regional Health Services polyclinics and also the various hospitals and the Bureau for Maternal and Child Care of the state-owned *'sLands Hospitaal*. This Bureau has been operational since 1985, and besides child care and activities in the area of birth control, particularly with regard to distribution and control of contraceptives, it also carries out activities with regard to women's reproductive health, in particular Papsmear tests.

About 80% of deliveries occur in hospital, followed by deliveries in polyclinics, and then by home deliveries supervised by trained health workers.

The Ministry of Health organizes programs to promote breastfeeding. There are no programmes that guarantee adequate nutrition by the State for pregnant women.

Maternal Mortality

The official maternal mortality rate fluctuated between 6.4 and 12.2 (per 100,000) in the period 1991-1994. However, a confidential study of maternal mortality over the period 1991-1993, showed serious under-reporting. The actual maternal mortality rate was 3.5 times higher than the figures based on the officially reported cases. This makes maternal death the main cause of death for Surinamese women of childbearing age. The above-mentioned study showed that one women out of every 120 dies as the result of complications during pregnancy or delivery. The most important causes of maternal death are haemorrhaging, and hypertensivedisorders during pregnancy. Transporting women over large distances to a hospital, or blood not being available in the hospital on time, were reported as cause of maternal death in a considerable number of cases[26].

Table 12.2: Number of HIV-positive Cases, 1997-1999

Year	Men		Women		Total	
1997	96	53%	86	47%	182	100%
1998	96	53%	88	48%	184	100%
1999 (Jan. through March)	27	56%	21	43%	48	100%

Data prior to 1997 are not gender-specific.
Source: Dermatology Service, 1999

[26] Ashok Mungra, 1999

Appendix to Article 12: Violence Against Women

Violence against women is a violation of a fundamental women' right. Pursuant to Article 9 of the Constitution, everyone has the right to physical, psychological and moral integrity, and no one may be subjected to torture, humiliating or inhumane treatment or punishment. The Criminal Code provides possibilities to punish violence. Reference is made, among other things, to the articles on acts of violence in a public place, violence resulting in (severe) bodily harm and death (Article 189), and maltreatment (Articles 360-366). There are provisions in Articles 295-298 of the Criminal Code with regard to the rape of girls and women, while Article 299 treats indecent assault. It is, furthermore, also possible for the party concerned to lodge a complaint with the Court of Justice if an offence, in this case violence committed against the woman, is not prosecuted or prosecuted further.

Amendment of the statutory regulations with regard to acts of violence is desirable, as these do not specifically apply to women. The following measures have been taken in this respect:

- The Minister of Justice and Police instituted a Government Commission on Public Decency Legislation by decree of 9 December 1996, No. 8212. The task of this Commission is, among other things, to amend the statutory regulations in the area of public decency. This Commission has yet to report.
- The Ministry of Home Affairs has made known its intention to install a National Commission "Legislation on Violence Against Women" with the task of making an inventory of and organizing national legislation with regard to this issue, and to examine it for compatibility with stipulations of treaties to which Suriname is party.

The first quantitative study of violence against women in Suriname was carried out in 1993[27]. It studied data of the emergency wards and police data on domestic violence against women, in order to gain more insight into the scale of violence against women in Suriname. The study showed that violence against women is indeed a social problem, particularly because of the fact that one out of every five police reports of violent acts or offenses against public decency concerned women who were abused by their (ex-)partner. The results of the study show that 94% of police reports in1993 concerned maltreatment, particularly of women abused by their husband or partner.

As far as could be determined, the police do not have recent data specifically on violence against women. However, the client registers of various organizations who provide assisytance to victims give a reasonable picture of the extent of violence against women. According to these organizations, the number of reports of violence has climbed in the last years, probably as a result of increased awareness among women.

As far as the Government is concerned, the Ministries of Justice and Police, Home Affairs, and Social Affairs and Housing play a role in combatting violence against women. The Ministry of Home Affairs, through its National Gender Bureau, facilitates the subsidization of activities aimed at care, counselling, training, etc. within the framework of the elimination of violence against women. The Ministry of Social Affairs and Housing provides material support to victims in need, in the form of social services (Financial Aid, Medical Assistance Card).

The Public Prosecutor's Office focusses on prosecuting perpetrators of violence. The legal framework within which prosecution must take place, is the responsibility of the National

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[27] Marthelise Eersel and Hedwig Goede: *Violence Against Women in Suriname, Report of a Study With Emergency Wards and Police*. Pro Health, Paramaribo, December 1993.

Assembly. Different Government and NGOs are directly or indirectly involved in protection of victims of violence and in providing legal assistance.
Material, psycho-social, spiritual, legal, medical aid and so forth are given by organizations such as Foundatioin Stop Violence Against Women, the Surinamese Department of the Caribbean Association for Feminist Research and Action (CAFRA), STICRIS; Shelter for Women in Crisis Situations, and the Ilse Henar-Hewit Legal Aid Bureau for Women.

The Foundation **Stop Violence Against Women** was founded in September 1992. Since October 1994, it has an executive Bureau. This organization is the only one professionally involved in individual care, guidance, counselling of female victims of violence, and also training. The organization is mainly involved with victims of domestic violence. Because of the study on sexual harrassment at work in 1998, however, the organization is being approached more and more often by victims of sexual harrassment in the workplace.
In 1997, 150 women approached the Foundation Stop Violence against Women. On average, there are 15-20 reports by telephone daily. From the client register of Stop Violence against Women it may be concluded that:

- the majority of clients have a low educational background: none or only primary school
- income of clients is low, on the basis of 1997 data This might also be a result of the fact that the clients generally have enjoyed very little education
- about 60% is younger than 35 years
- the majority is unmarried (65%).

- In 1994, **CAFRA Suriname** commissioned a study on domestic violence against women in conjugal relationships. 69% of the interviewed women (n = 264) was found to have been a victim of this form of violence. Married women turned out to be less victimized than women living in concubinage or women in a visitor's relationship. This last group in turn was victimized less ofen than women living in concubinage[28].

The **STICRIS: Shelter for Women in Crisis Situations**, which was founded in October, 1981, is the only temporary shelter for women in crisis situations, some with children. These women are mainly victims of domestic violence. Accomodations are very limited. The shelter has 15 units. 33 women and their children were helped in 1996, while in 1997 there were 25, and in 1998 there were 18. Besides care and shelter, guidance is also offered, in deliberation with an external social worker.

The **Ilse Henar-Hewit Legal Aid Bureau for Women**, founded in June 1997, is the legal section of the National Women's Movement (NVB). This Bureau offers professional legal advice to women, for a small fee. Female victims of violence are also turning to this Bureau for advice now (1998: 157 women).

Violence at Work
Although it is not a new social phenomenon, organizations have only recently become interested in violence at work. In 1998, as mentioned under Article 11 with regard to Labor, the national steering group Women Workers' Rights, under the auspices of the Ministry of Labour, commissioned a study of sexual harrassment at work, in order to gain more insight into the phenomenon in Suriname, and the development of policy with regard to it[29]. For that study, female employees from various sectors were interviewed, as well as representatives of NGOs,

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[28] H. Malmberg-Guicherit, *Report of the Study Conducted Among Institutes in Paramaribo Involved in the Area of Aid to Female Victims of Domestic Violence*. Parmaribo, June, 1998.
[29] Sno, T. *Sexual Harrassment at Work*. Paramaribo, September, 1998.

the business community, and the trade unions, who were mainly male. The study produced a number of important findings:

- More than half of the women indicated that there was sexual harrassment at work.
- One third of the women experienced sexual harrassment at work.
- The employers and trade unions who were interviewed had no policy with regard to sexual harassment, nor was there a grievance procedure in case of sexual harrassment.
- There is no specific legislation, although there are indirect grounds which the victim can use.
- As far as could be determined, there are no legal precedents either, which victims could refer to.

Economic and Social Life

Article 13.

States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in other areas of economic and social life in order to ensure, on a basis of equality of men and women, the same rights, in particular:

Article 13, sub a

(a) The right to family benefits;

Accident Regulation

Pursuant to the Accident Regulation (Bulletin of Acts and Decrees 1947, as amended in Bulletin 1983 No. 8), female and male employees both have the right to benefits if they had a work-related accident (see also Article 11 Paragraph 1 sub e of the Convention). In case of death, the heirs of the employee are entitled to the benefits. However, in defining heirs the law proceeded from male employees. Thus, the wife or concubine and possibly ex-wife – if he was responsible for her maintenance – is eligible for benefits. The ex-wife receives benefits until a possible subsequent marriage. The concubine is eligible if she is the mother of children acknowledged by the man, and if she was a member of the man's family at the moment of the accident. In case of a female employee, strict application of this provision will exclude her husband of eligibility for benefits (Article 6 Paragraph 3).

Pursuant to Articles 2 and 4 of the Civil Servants Accident Regulation Decree (Bulletin of Acts and Decrees1995 No. 24), none-recurring benefits will be granted to a civil servant (man or woman) and the survivors of the civil servant in case of a job-related accident. Survivors are considered to be the widow/widower, the minor children of the female civil servant, the legitimate, legitimized and acknowledged children of the male civil servant, the partner, the foster children and minor acknowledged and unacknowledged children of the female civil servant in cohabitation, and the acknowledged children of the male civil servant in cohabitation. Most companies with a Collective Labour Agreement also have provisions for survivors, depending on who are considered family members.

Child Benefit

Child benefit, which is regulated in the Generel Family Regulation of 1973 (Bulletin of Acts and Decrees 1973 No. 107), is granted to interested parties at their request for their children. Interested parties are parents – father or mother – who do not receive child benefit because of service with the Government or with a private company. The Ministry of Social Affairs and Public Housing is responsible for the execution of the General Family Benefit Regulation. Eligible are the legitimate, legitimized, and adopted children of the interested party, the legally acknowledged children of the male interested party, the natural children of the female interested party, the foster children, or children related by marriage of the interested party (Article 2). The Generel

Family Benefit Regulation grants child benefit to a maximum of four children. The maximum number of children is not strictly adhered to in the implementation. The amount of the benefit is long out-dated: a monthly payment of Sf. 30.– per child[30].

The right to child benefit via the employer is not uniformly regulated. In the Collective Labour Agreements of, in particular, large companies, the right of employees to child benefit is linked to the right to child benefit granted to the partner elsewhere. If the child benefit of the partner are higher, the employee does not enjoy the right to child benefit in his or her place of work. If it is lower, the balance is paid. Generally speaking, the concept of 'employee' in Collective Labour Agreements covers women as well as men, while the concept of 'partner' depends on whether or not concubinage is recognized.

Pensions

The Civil Servants' Pension Act (Bulletin of Acts and Decrees 1972 No. 150, as amended in Bulletin1996 No. 39) recognizes the right to Old Age Pension, Disability Pension, Widow's and Orphan's Pension, Widower's Pension, and temporary pension. According to this Act, however, the partner of the female civil servant, is not eligible for a widower's pension. In such cases, the Pension Fund – anticipating a legal amendment – does pay a pension if requested, if the partner can prove that he has cohabited with the civil servant for at least ten years, and they have children. Furthermore, there is also a draft amendment of the Pension Act, which must guarantee the widow's pension of the first wife in case of divorce. This amendment implies that in case of death, the first wife/husband may claim payment of pension up to the divorce. For the rest, reference is made to the remarks under Article 11 sub e. Further information with regard to general retirement and pension has been provided in the socioeconomic sketch of Suriname.

The benefits ensuing from the accident regulation, child benefit, pension, general old age benefit, health care and financial assistance, are paid diretly to the persons entitled. In Article 14, under c, the payment of family benefit to people of the interior will be discussed. There is no institution where citizens in general, and women in particular, can apply when they think their rights to benefits are violated.

Article 13, sub b

(b) The right to bank loans, mortgages and other forms of financial credit;

Officially, women and men have equal access to bank loans, mortgages, etc.: the criteria are identical. It is not possible to test this formal rule against real practice, because of a lack of data on the access of women to credit facilities. According to credit institutions, however, few married women apply for a loan; application for credit is usually done by their husbands. Bank officals also claim that giving guarantees is a problem for single women, because people do not seem very eager to stand surety for a single woman. And a married woman requires her husband's permission if she wishes to stand surety for a third party.

The lack of data on requests for financing by women with commercial banks, precludes any real comparisons with other credit institutions. With regard to the accessibility of cooperatives to women, it turns out that more than half of the members of the two largest savings and credit cooperatives, *Godo* and *De Schakel*, are women. The management of *De Schakel* is 45% women, while the management of *Godo* is 36% women. The percentage of women members of the other savings and credit cooperatives in 1998 was between 20 and 25%. Besides the

[30] At an exchange rate of US$ 1.– = Sf. 1500.–, the monthly payment amounts to US$ 0.07.

general savings and credit facilities, *Godo* has a revolving fund for female micro-entrepreneurs to finance feasible, small-scale economic activities.

Article 13, sub c

(c) The right to participate in recreational activities, sports and all aspects of cultural life.

In accordance with Article 38 of the Constitution, everyone has the right to cultural life, and the State must encourage democratization of culture through the enjoyment of culture and cultural creation, and guarantee access to that cultural creation of all citizens through cultural and recreational associations, educational media and other suitable channels. In Suriname, the Ministry of Education is responsible for education, culture, sport and recreation. Implementation of policy with regard thereto is generally undertaken by NGOs, with or without support from the Government and/or privatebusiness.

Recreational Activities and Sports

The availability of adequate accommodations for sports and recreational activities at the local level is a problem. An important reason is the lack of funds for maintenance and infrastructure. Despite these limitations, activities are planned and executed with the special effort of non-governmental, neighbourhood, and sports organizations.

Most sports are practiced in Suriname: recreational sports, as well as competitive sports. The majority of schools offers physical education for boys and girls. Schools in the rural areas and interior, which generally lack accomodations, are the exception. According to the Directorate of Sports of the Ministry of Education, the participation of women in sports activities has strongly increased in the last ten years, in recreational as well as competitive sports, and even in top-level sports. Surinamese women have achieved excellent results at national, regional and international sports meets in swimming, track and field, tennis, and bodybuilding. Women are most visible in the following sports: softball, volleyball, basketball, swimming, track and field, football, jogging, tennis. In 1998, seven women's teams participated in the national basketball competition (compared with 14 men's teams), ten participated in the volleyball competition (compared with 9 men's teams), and twenty participated in softball (no men's teams). Recently, softball has become a very popular sport among women of various ethnic groups and ages, both in town and in the districts.

Women are reasonably well represented in the leadership of the various sports associations: 14% women in the volleyball league; 13% women in the swimming league; 20% women in the track and field league, 50% women in the tennis league; 0% women in the football league, and 95% women in the softball league.

Culture

Suriname has an unrivaled cultural richness, originating in the settlement of different ethnic groups throughout the years. The ethno-cultural diversity of Surinamese society is the basis of the cultural policy, which aims at broadening and deepening knowledge of the values and backgrounds of cultural expressions, in order to develop a national cultural identity[31]. There is a considerable number of non-governmental cultural organizations in Paramaribo, the districts, and the interior, some of which receive Government subventions. According to the Directorate of Culture, which is responsible for granting subventions to cultural groups, most of these are organizations and associations in the area of material and intellectual culture, and most.consist

[31] Government Policy Statement 1996-2000.

of women. Women contribute much to the presentation of cultural traditions of the various ethnic groups through handicrafts, dance, song, music, religion, literature, theatre, and (visual) arts. Music and arts are mainly the domain of men. The Government has no clear policy on subventions, because an adequate inventory of cultural organizations is lacking.

Rural Women

Article 14

Rights of Women in Rural Areas

The remarks made under the previous Articles of the Convention with regard to women's rights are equally applicable to women in rural areas.

Article 14, Paragraph 1

States Parties shall take into account the particular problems faced by rural women and the significant roles which rural women play in the economic survival of their families, including their work in the non-monetized sectors of the economy, and shall take all appropriate measures to ensure the application of the provisions of this Convention to women in rural areas.

Enforcing these rights for women in rural areas is not sufficiently guaranteed, because of limited availability and accessibility of the relevant facilities, as a result of bad infrastructure, the concentration of vital services in Paramaribo, and finally, cultural limitations. In Suriname, the rural areas include the total area outside the urban area of Paramaribo. Thus, the rural areas in the coastal plain and in the interior, which is populated by Indigenous Peoples (Amerindians) and Maroons, are included in the assessment of this Article.

Rural women in Suriname are:
1. Tribal women, residing in the coastal plain and in the interior. One should distinguish between Indigenous Peoples (Amerindians) and Maroons.
2. Non-tribal women, residing in the coastal plain.

Differences between the two categories of rural women mainly regard:
- culture: tribal women emphasize collectivity
- governance: tribal women are confronted with their own forms and rules of traditional authority in their living areas
- land rights: land use among tribal peoples is collective.

Culture, governance and land rights each influence the position of particularly tribal women.

The general position of rural women is closely tied to agriculture. Agriculture is one of the important sectors of production in Suriname, in view of export value. Agriculture is practiced in the coastal plain and in the interior. In the coastal plain this is both large-scale and small-scale agriculture. Large-scale agriculture is run by companies that plant one or more commercial crops, using paid employees to produce raw materials for industry or export. Large-scale agriculture is dominated by men. Small-scale agriculture in the districts consists mainly of middle-sized and small to very small farms, managed and exploited by families, whereby the family members themselves provide the capital and humanpower required for production. Many

women are employed in this sub-sector. Family members are responsible for management and most of the labor. Small-scale agriculture produces the majority of vegetables and fruits for own use and the local market.

A variety of small-scale agriculture is the method of 'shifting cultivation', practiced in the interior by the Indigenous Peoples and Maroons. Initially, production was for own consumption, but it is now increasingly for the national market as well. Crops are mainly roots and tubers, and the gathering and sale of herbs.

The current socio-economic situation of rural women cannot be portrayed, because of incompleteness and inconsistency of existing data on the labour market. However, one might conclude that women are the most important producers in small-scale agricultural activities in the coastal plain and the interior.

Table 14.1 provides an overview of the planted area in the period 1990-1995 according to type of agriculture. An increase in the planted area for small-scale agriculture is apparent from the overview, which might be an indication of the increasing production capacity of rural women. Nevertheless, the Government has no specific agricultural policy aimed at sustainable development of small holdings, which takes into consideration the position of women in this sub-sector. Agricultural policy has for many years been aimed at supporting and producing export products. The Minsitry of Regional Development, which is responsible for the interior, acknowledges the special role of women in the interior, but there are no structural, concrete policy measures as yet, owing to a lack of skilled humanpower and funds.

Women in the Agricultural Sector

Very few reliable statistical data and little general information are available on Surinamese women in agriculture. Their real share in agricultural production and development cannot be deduced from existing statistical material. According to the categorization of the working population in agriculture in Table 14.2, three to four times more men than women are employed in the agricultural sector. As was indicated earlier, women's production is not described in terms of productive labour, so figures should be interpreted with the necessary caution.

Female farmers can be subdivided into three categories[32]:

a) Women in the coastal plain, who produce for the market, and who work on the family farm. They work full-time or part-time in production, and are generally also active in processing and marketing the products. Often the husband or father manages the company. If the woman owns or manages the farm, she is responsible for all aspects of farm-management. In the districts, the participation of women in production is generally considered part of her extensive household duties. Her contribution in production is part of her work within the extended family and as such is not considered as labour which should be economically rewarded. In most cases, women spend more than 50% of their working day on production activities.
b) Female food producers in the interior, whose livelihood is based on agriculture. They produce mainly for subsistence, while surpluses are sold if there are buyers. For these Indigenous and Maroon women, agriculture is their main livelihood, and they are traditionally responsible for food production, and the survival of the members of their communities. Thus, the majority of their time is spent on food production.

[32] Defares, 1996

c) Women in the coastal plain who use virtually the same agricultural technique, i.e. shifting cultivation, as the women of the interior, and also plant the same crops. Besides that, they are also specialized in processing root vegetables and tubers for sale.

A second differentiation is possible with regard to participation of women in the agricultural sector, namely of formal and informal sectors. The informal sector is cottage industry, whereby women are employed in food processing and trade in agricultural products. According to the mainly qualitative data of women's organizations, the number of women in cottage industries is increasing. An important cause for this, is the deteriorating economic situation, combined with few job opportunities. The formal sector consists mainly of agro-industrial activities, for which women are generally employed in low-status, low-paid, unskilled jobs. Studies (Defares, 1996) show that male colleagues receive higher pay for equal work. No recent material on the matter is as yet available.

Article 14, Paragraph 2

States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in rural areas in order to ensure, on a basis of equality of men and women, that they participate in and benefit from rural development and, in particular, shall ensure to such women the right:

Article 14, Paragraph 2 sub a

(a) To participate in the elaboration and implementation of development planning at all levels;

No specific regulations were found in Surinamese law with regard to the participation of women in the development of rural areas.The Constitution doesstipulate that the State should create conditions to form citizens who are capable of participating democratically and effectively in the process of development of the nation (Article 46). The Ministry of Regional Development is responsible for regional development planning in general, while the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Husbandry and Fisheries is in charge of planning development in the agricultural sector. In the discussion of Article 7 on political participation of women in Suriname, it was already mentioned that the representation of women at national, regional, and local levels is minimal. The local government bodies, in which (rural) women are also hardly represented, are in first instance responsible for the implementation of the plans.

Article 14, Paragraph 2 sub b

(b) To have access to adequate health care facilities, including information, counseling and services in family planning;

In general, there are few data available that could help to provide an insight into life expectancy, nutrition status, and maternal mortality rates of rural women, or of child mortality rates in those regions. Reference is made to the results of a study conducted in 1997/1998 on contraception and STD/HIV[33]:

[33] Medical Mission, *Study on Sexual Behaviour and Sexually Transmitted Diseases Among Maroon and Indigenous Populations in the Hinterland of Suriname*. Paramaribo, 1999.

- Health care in the interior is deteriorating rapidly, resulting in the threat of severe shortages of basic health facilities in different parts of the interior, among which means for preventing STD and for birth control, such as condoms and oral contraceptives.
- The use of contraceptives among Maroons is lowest, compared to other ethnic groups. Results of the above-mentioned study among Maroons showed that about 11% of the interviewed women used some form of contraception. Low schooling, lack of access to knowledge of contraception, cultural ideas of fertility and sexuality, and unequal gender relations are important factors hindering an adequate use of contraceptives.

Studies carried out in a number of Maroon and Indigenous communities show that knowledge of transmision and prevention of sexually transmitted deseases and HIV/AIDS among women is significantly lower than among men. Low schooling and limited access to alternative and adapted sources of information can be indicated as the main reasons for the lack of adequate knowledge among women of the interior. Despite the fact that Maroons rank second among ethnic groups with the highest number of HIV-positive people, and the fact that the prevalence of STD's is high in the interior, condoms are hardly used. While the majority of women know that they risk infection with HIV, only 2.4% consistently use condoms.

There is no specific Government policy on family planning and increasing the knowledge of transmission and prevention of sexually transmitted diseases, directed towards rural women.

Article 14, Paragraph 2 sub c

(c) To benefit directly from social security programmes;

Social security facilities are intended for men as well as women, and are not dependent on the place of residence. In practice, the accessibility of social facilities is a problem for rural people. As a result of bad infrastructure and logistics, which have further deteriorated owing to the war in the interior between 1986 and 1992, the costs involved in paying out monthly allowances are extremely high. Because of this, allowances such as Child Benefit, Financial Aid, and Old Age Pension and allowances for the disabled are paid irregularly to people in the interior and the districts. As rural women are responsible for food security and further maintenance of the household, they are hit worst by arrears in these payments. About 60% of women entitled to welfare, who receive Financial Aid from the Ministry of Social Affairs and Public Housing, and 49% of women who receive Old Age Pensions, live in the rural areas[34].

Article 14, Paragraph 2 sub d

(d) To obtain all types of training and education, formal and non-formal, including that relating to functional literacy, as well as, inter alia, the benefit of all community and extension services, in order to increase their technical proficiency;

Education up to junior secondary level is available in most districts, with the exception of the District of Sipaliwini, where most Indigenous Peoples and Maroons live. Distribution of educational facilities within the borders of the districts is limited. On the one hand, there is a structural shortage, and on the other hand, the Government is confronted with demands for education from small populations. This problem is exacerbated by the lack of adequate communications facilities and transportation in the rural areas. A study of the educational

[34] Ministry of Social Affairs and Public Housing, Department of Scientific Research and Planning, 1999

situation in the Upper Suriname River and Marowijne areas, showed the following[35]: 61% of children along the Upper Suriname River have no access to formal education, and school attendance by Ndjuka and Saramaccan girls in the interior is 10% less than that of boys. Furthermore, participation of girls in education turns out to decrease with age. At the age of 14 years, the number of girls who no longer participate in education increases to 22%.

The quality of education for Indigenous Peoples and Maroons is less than that in the capital. Teachers usually have lower qualifications than primary school teaching credentials, there are insufficient schools and not enough materials. The level of education of people in the interior is low. The majority of the population is illiterate or has only managed to follow primary school. The educational level of women in the interior is significantly lower than that of men. Studies among Saramaccans and Ndjuka in the interior show that Saramaccan and Ndjuka women together form about 75% of female illiterates among Maroons.[36] The low educational level of women is reflected, among other things, in the fact that a considerable part of the women do not know their age. Lack of schooling affects access to important sources of information.

Many courses and trainings are organized by NGOs; they are mainly aimed at strengthening capacity, in combination with literacy. There is a trend to train local women who in turn will train other women (Training-of-Trainers' projects).

Article 14, Paragraph 2 sub e

(e) To organize self-help groups and co-operatives in order to obtain equal access to economic opportunities through employment or self-employment;

The self-help groups mentioned in this context are women's organizations and cooperatives. Despite the fact that no reliable data are available on women's organizations in the rural areas, it may be concluded on the basis of information from the National Bureau for Gender Policy (NBG) of the Ministry of Home Affairs, as well as information from non-governmental organizations, that the level of organization has strongly increased in the last decade. This is true for the districts as well as for the Indigenous and Maroon women in the interior. The level of organization varies from incorporated organizations to informal women's groups. Some have extensive networks and inter-institutional linkages with other women's organizations or with professional and commercial institutions, in order to strengthen their own organization and improve the position of their members. As far as could be traced, there is only one rural cooperative which was founded by women, and consists solely of women. It is an agricultural cooperative, founded in the District of Marowijne by and for Maroon women for the production and sale of roots and tubers. Women are members of mixed savings and credit cooperatives, in their own community as well as outside, though this is limited and only a few women are active[37].

Article 14, Paragraph 2 sub f

(e) To participate in all community activities;

Rural women hardly participate in outdoor activities, with the exception of religious and cultural activities. On the one hand, this is because there are few options or none at all. On the other hand, rural women spend most of their time on production and household activities, so they have

[35] *Stichting Kenki Skoro*, April 1998

[36] Medical Mission 1999, and National Women's Movement 1998.

[37] Defares 1997; Sastroredjo 1997; Amatsakio 1998.

little time left for community activities. Studies of rural women show that they spend on average five hours per day on production and eight hours on the household[38].

Article 14, Paragraph 2 sub g

(f) To have access to agricultural credit and loans, marketing facilities, appropriate technology and equal treatment in land and agrarian reform as well as in land resettlement schemes;

Agricultural credits and loans are available for those interested – men and women – via the Agraricultural Bank of Suriname, which has branches in all districts. One can also approach various agricultural credit cooperatives in the rural areas.
In Article 13 mention was already made of the possibilities which the *GODO* credit cooperative offers locally through the *Pater Ahlbrink Stichting* (PAS) to small businesses in the interior. In view of the contribution of women in small-scale agriculture, they should make more use of the services of the Agricultural Bank and credit cooperatives in the agricultural sector. Actually, men request and are granted the credit, as the persons responsible for the farm.

As far as the sale of products is concerned, facilities are lacking. Especially women in distant communities have problems selling their products because of bad infrastructure and the lack of affordable transportation. Moreover, the same crops are planted in all areas, resulting in limited differentiation, which might also be a reason for poor sales.

Land policy in Suriname is primarily based on Decree L-1-1982 No. 10 (Buletin of Acts and Decrees 1982 no. 10). In accordance with this decree, every Surinamese national residing in Suriname is granted the right to ownership of state land. Women in the districts consider access to land for agricultural purposes as a problem. If a woman holds the title to land, in most cases she has acquired this through inheritance, and only in a few cases by applying to the Ministry of Natural Resources, which is responsible for land policy. The percentage of women who applied for and were granted land through the years is negligible: less than 1% of the total number of applications (Ministry of Natural Resources, 1998). The land requested by and granted to women – particularly single women and heads of households – varies from 0.5 to 1 ha. An obstacle for women is the lack of a fixed and sufficient income , in accordance with the requirement for granting state land.

The question of availability of and access to agricultural land for women in the interior is closely linked to the problems surrounding the recognition of traditional land rights of Indigenous Peoples and Maroons, as part of the right to self-determination. The right to self-determination relates to "the right to maintain one's own traditional authority, implement one's own legal systems, and to freely develop the communities within the territories to be determined". In short, the largest possible autonomy is sought within the context of the national State[39]. The only possibility for tribal women to attain title to land is individual title on the basis of the L-Decree. Such title, however, does not seem to fit with the ideas with regard to collective land and the inalienable ownership of land in the interior. To achieve an accurate picture of the land rights issue of the people in the interior, the Government instituted the Commission on State Land for Indigenous Peoples and Maroons in December 1998. The Commission has meanwhile published an interim report, which will be discussed with all concerned. The Government has not

[38] Defares 1996; Amatsakio 1998.
[39] Report of Sanomaro Esa of the Third Meeting of Indigenous Women, Matta 1998.

yet undertaken actions to ratify ILO Convention 169 in which the land rights of Indigenous and Tribal Peoples are acknowledged.

One problem confronting women in the interior is actual access to agricultural land, because they are strongly dependent on male villagers for this. Traditionally, laying out / clearing the fields and building a work-hut is the responsibility of men. However, men are absent because of economic activities outside the community, such as gold-mining, logging, and trade, and the preparation of the fields strongly depends on the their return. As an incidental solution to this problem, women's groups in some villages, with the support of NGOs and the Government, have turned to acquiring tools to clear the fields themselves. This, however, means an increase in the workload of women.

Finally, there are a number of other bottlenecks encountered by rural women. The women lack the **technology** to replace the often labor-intensive agricultural methods. It is mainly NGOs who, operating from Paramaribo, carry out projects in the rural areas with the purpose of teaching women modern technologies. Futhermore, women focus on planting only one or just a few crops. There is not enough know-how on crops in general and particularly on the possibilities of processing crops .

Article 14, Paragraph 2 sub h

(g) To enjoy adequate living conditions, particularly in relation to housing, sanitation, electricity and water supply, transport and communications.

Generally speaking, the above-mentioned facilities are more readily available in the districts than in the interior. The Government and NGOs have realized a number of projects within the framework of general regional development and the the reconstruction of the interior. These are projects in the area of electric power, water supply, housing, sanitation, transport, radio- and telecommunication, and bridge construction. But water and electricity are still a problem for most areas. Most areas get electric power through diesel generators, while they rely on rain or river water. The water is used for cooking, washing and bathing, and can form a health hazard.. Some communities have a water pump, but tap water is not always guaranteed. There are sometimes wells, but these have sometimes become polluted with mercury used in gold mining. The lack of safe water, electricitity, sanitation and good housing mainly affect women, as they are directly involved in the household. The position of tribal women is closely linked to the environment. Women depend on a clean environment for their livelihood. Thus, whenever the environment is damaged or polluted (by mining, logging and other activities), it directly affects the well-being of Indigenous and Maroon women.

Table 14.1: Surface Area (ha) of Agricultural Land Planted, According to Type of Agriculture, 1990-1995

	1990	1991	1993	1995
Small-Scale Agriculture	21256	28922	32250	33619
Large-Scale Agriculture	48486	49693	45586	41963
Total	69742	78615	77836	75582

Source: General Bureau of Statistics, *Statistical Yearbook 1996*

Table 14.2: Population Employed in Agriculture according to Status and Gender, 1993-1998

	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
Entrepreneurs	136	52	166	0	201	163	201	54
Self-Employed	1470	136	2045	280	3105	193	1936	131
Employees	1955	172	1702	45	1357	0	2147	72
Unpaid Family Members	360	188	110	0	48	197	509	270
Unknown	0	0	349	0	48	0	221	0
Total	3921	548	4372	325	4759	553	5014	527
% Employed Population	7.6%	2.0%	8.5%	1.2%	8.7%	2.0%	8.7%	1.8%

Source: General Bureau of Statistics, 1998

PART IV

Equality Before the Law

Article 15, Paragraph 1

States Parties shall accord to women equality with men before the law.

Article 35 Paragraph 2 of the Constitution states that men and women are equal before the law. However, this principle is not reflected in all statutory regulations, as was already indicated in the discussion of previous Articles (Articles 9, 11 and 12).

Article 15, Paragraph 2

States Parties shall accord to women, in civil matters, a legal capacity identical to that of men and the same opportunities to exercise that capacity. In particular, they shall give women equal rights to conclude contracts and to administer property and shall treat them equally in all stages of procedure in courts and tribunals.

As of 1981, the legal capacity of married women is regulated by Decree C-11 (Bulletin of Acts and Decrees 1981 No. 23). Legal capacity means that married women can perform legal acts on their own, without permission or assistance from their husbands. This Decree proceeds from the principle of equality of all citizens, regardless of gender. This decree does not apply, however, to partners living in concubinage. A cohabitation contract presents them with the possiblity of settling their mutual proprietary rights. Civil law notaries should provide information and guidance in this area.

In Suriname one can marry in general community of property or under pre-nuptial agreement. In both cases the cooperation of both partners – if the spouses share a household – is required to purchase goods for the common household on installment credit terms (Article 162 of the Civil Code). Permission of the other spouse is required for, among other things, the sale or mortgaging of the matrimonial house and household goods, making donations or to stand surety for a third party (Article 163 Civil Code). If the spouses are married in general community of property, the cooperation of the other spouse is required for the sale or mortgaging of real estate (Article 172 Paragaph 3 Civil Code). This is to protect the spouses for the benefit of the family (provision to protect the family). If cooperating, the other spouse also becomes party and is liable to the extent of his or her private property, which is not the case when permission is granted. If there is no cooperation, the legal act is null and void, and if no permission is given, the other spouse may invoke nullity and claim the property.

Article 15, Paragraph 3

States Parties agree that all contracts and all other private instruments of any kind with a legal effect which is directed at restricting the legal capacity of women shall be deemed null and void.

In most cases, agreements and documents are drawn up by persons with a legal training, such as lawyers and notaries. These professionals are bound by codes of practice, and they cannot therefore draw up agreements or documents which would limit the legal capacity of women. If the code of practice is violated, the Court of Justice can take measures. Reference is made to

the discussion of Article 15 Paragraph 2, which states that mutual permission and cooperation is required to perform certain legal acts by spouses.

On the basis of Article 12 of the Constitution, every individual has the right to legal assistance, which is provided by the Legal Aid Bureau of the Ministry of Justice and Police. Women and men get equal punishment in case of comparable facts and circumstances, while equal legal means are open to both men and women.

Article 15, Paragraph 4

States Parties shall accord to men and women the same rights with regard to the law relating to the movement of persons and the freedom to choose their residence and domicile.

In accordance with Article 16 Paragraph 1 of the Constitution, everyone shall have the right to personal freedom and safety. Furthermore, no one may be deprived of his or her freedom on other grounds than those set forth in Article 16 Paragraph 2 of the Constitution. These provisions apply to both men and women. If one is deprived of one's freedom, one must be treated in accordance with human dignity (Article 16 Paragraph 3 of the Constitution).

The place of residence is regulated in Articles 68 through 77 of the Civil Code. The wording of the rules are gender-neutral. In 1981, Decree C-11 abolished the rule that a married woman was supposed to follow to the place of residence of her husband. The Decree lays down that the place of residence can be chosen in lutual deliberation, if the woman lives and works abroad. With regard to the freedom to choose one's residence, it is stipulated that spouses are required to cohabit, barring serious causes which might prevent that (Article 158 Paragraph 1Civil Code). The place of cohabitation is determined by mutual deliberation (Article 158 Paragraph 2Civil Code). Neither this Code nor the Explanatory Memorandum explain what "serious causes" are understood to be. What is indicated is that if there might be disagreement with regard to the place of cohabitation, this can be brought before the judge.

Marriage and Family Life

Article 16, Paragraph 1

States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in all matters relating to marriage and family relations and in particular shall ensure, on a basis of equality of men and women:

Article 16, Paragraph 1 sub a

(a) The same right to enter into marriage;

In Suriname, one can enter into marriage according to the Civil Code and according to the Asian Marriage Codes, namely the Marriage Act for Hindus and the Marriage Act for Muslims. The Asian Marriage Codes were introduced in Suriname in order to put an end to the undesired situation of unlawful marriages and illegitimate children among the immigrants who came to Suriname from British India and the Netherlands East Indies, starting in 1873. The marriages were unlawful, because they did not meet the requirements of the rules of the Surinamese Civil Code. This form of marriage is based on, respectively, Hindu and Muslim religious principles.

The differences between the Asian Marriage Codes and marriage according to the Civil Code lie mainly in the area of the age limit for marriage partners, the solemnization of the marriage, and the method of dissolution of the marriage. Marriages entered into according to the Marriage Act for Hindus and the Marriage Act for Muslims have the same legal effect as Civil Code marriages.

Although the Indigenous Peoples and the tribal Maroons also have their own specific marriage systems, there are no provisions in the national legislation for these peoples, comparable to those for the Asian groups.

Concubinage is not acknowledged by law. Article 80 of the Civil Code indicates that a man can have only 1 wife, and a women can have only 1 husband. Polygamy is punishable by law according to Article 288 SR. Although the law does not acknowledge polygamy, the Maroon tribes of the interior have their own customs, which allow a man more than one wife.

In the Civil Code marriage system, the following requirements must be met:
- future spouses must have given their free consent (Article 81Civil Code);
- the woman must be at least 15 years of age, and the man must be at least 18 years of age (Article 82 Civil Code);
- parental consent for the marriage must be obtained by both the man and the woman up to the age of 30 (Article 88 Civil Code), or possibly that of a third-party guardian up to the age of 21.

The requirements for entering into a marriage according to the Asian Marriage Codes differ from those for marriage according to the Civil Code with regard to the minimum age and permission from parents/guardian. For boys, the age limit is 15 years and for girls 13 years. Consent from parents/guardian is not required for these marriages, but in practise it is asked. The so-called Asian marriage extract, which is required to enter into marriage according to the Asian Marriage Codes, is not issued to minors.

The number of marriages according to the Marriage Act for Hindus is higher than other forms of marriage in the 1993-1997 period, namely 41% - 47% annually of the total number of marriages. After an initial increase of 1942 marriages in 1993 to 2310 in 1996, the number dropped to 2073 in 1997 (see Table 16.1). The average age of women marrying according to the Marriage Act for Hindus is lower than that of women marrying according to the Civil Code. Muslim women occupy an intermediate position (see Table 16.2). Another phenomenon is the slight increase in the age of Hindu women at marriage (from 21.2 years in 1992 to 22.3 years in 1997), while women marrying according to the Civil Code are generally older.

The number of divorces increased from 699 in 1992 to 860 in 1993 and dropped to 517 in 1997. Most divorces and repudiations (i.e. divorce according to the Muslim Marriage Act) occur between the ages of 20 and 29 for women and for men between the ages of 30 and 39. It may be concluded that the number of marriages is decreasing slightly, while the number of divorces and repudiations varied in the reference period.

Article 16, Paragraph 1 sub b

(b) The same right freely to choose a spouse and to enter into marriage only with their free and full consent;

The freedom to choose a spouse lies at the basis of the marriage legislation in Suriname country. In Article 81 of the Civil Code, the free consent of the future spouses is required to enter

into marriage.This requirement also applies to marriages entered into according to the Marriage Act for Hindus and the Marriage Act for Muslims. If the requirement of free consent is disregarded, both spouses or the spouse whose consent was not obtained may appeal to have the marriage annulled. This matter is regulated in Article 140 of the Civil Code and in Article 2 of the Asian Marriage Codes. The Ilse Henar Hewitt Bureau for Legal Aid, a non-Governmental Organization, also provides information on minimum ages and marriage consent, and entry of marriages in the Marriage Registers.

Although statistics are lacking, arranged marriages of girls and young women still occasionally occur among certain ethnic groups (Hindustani, Chinese, Javanese), with or without their consent as to the moment of marriage and the choice of a partner. This concerns both the date of marriage and the choice of the husband. Information on payment of dowry, which is a tradition among the East-Indian ethnic group, is also lacking.

Article 16, Paragraph 1 sub c

(c) The same rights and responsibilities during marriage and at its dissolution;

The Civil Code stipulates that spouses shall be faithful to one another and shall provide one another with assistance and support, and are mutually obliged to give each other all that is necessary, and to care for and raise their children (Articles 156 and 157 Civil Code). But women do not in all ways have the same rights and responsibilities during marriage, since Article 79 of the Civil Code stipulates that the wife shall follow the status of her husband during marriage. At the same time, the Civil Code contains a marriage impediment aimed specifically at women, namely that a woman – barring exceptions mentioned in the law – cannot remarry within 306 days after the death of her husband (Article 887). This provision was entered to prevent confusion of offspring. The period of 306 days was adopted as a maxium term of a pregnancy. In case of divorce, the ex-husband may prevent the next marriage of his former wife if this should occur within 306 days after the divorce (Article 117 Civil Code). The ex-husband has this authority because it is in his interest that a child of his should not be born in a following marriage.

According to the Civil Code, marriages are dissolved through:
- death
- a ten-year absence of one of the spouses and a subsequent marriage
- decision of the court after legal separation
- divorce as a result of adultory, or grave abuse.

The now strongly out-dated grounds for divorce are comprehensively enumerated in the Civil Code (Article 262Civil Code). In the dissolution of marriage the same rules apply to both men and women. With regard to alimony it is stipulated that this can only be awarded (by the judge) to the party who has instituted divorce proceedings, in case of poverty (Article 278 Civil Code).

There are a number of notable similarities between the Civil Code and the Asian Marriage Codes. For instance, the stipulation in the Civil Code (Articles 156 and 157Civil Code) by which spouses are obliged to support one another and share responsibility for the care and education of their children, also applies to marriages entered into according to the Asian Marriage Codes. The Asian Marriage Codes also follow the Civil Code with regard to the unequal legal status of the wife within the marriage.

The provisions of the Civil Code with regard to dissolution of the marriage and legal separation apply to marriages entered into according to the Hindu religion, but not to marriages entered into

according to Islam (Article 2 of the Marriage Act for Muslims). In the latter case, specific rules apply, which are laid down in the Marriage Act for Muslims. In accordance with the Marriage Act for Hindus, the rules of the Civil Code apply (see Article 2 of the Marriage Act for Hindus, in which the rules of Title X for the dissolution of marriage and XI for separation of the Civil Code are not excluded).

Divorce and repudiation is regulated in the Marriage Act for Muslims (Article 4). The divorce is pronounced by the normal court and repudiation occurs outside the court, but in the presence of an especially assigned public servant. In the explanation to this law, repudiation is defined as a unilateral declaration of intention of the husband, resulting in the end of the marriage. Repudiation is also possible pursuant to Article 4 Paragraph 3 of the Marriage Act for Muslims, if one of the requirements for entering into the marriage has not been met. The requirement can refer to, for instance, abuse, malicious abandonment, or prolonged absence. In accordance with the Marriage Act for Muslims, repudiation can only be performed by the man. Repudiation is therefore in conflict with the principle of equality. But, since in practise the woman can also request that a marriage be dissolved, this provision has become a dead letter.

In 1973, the "Amendment to the Marriage Act 1973" (Bulletin of Acts and Decrees 1973 No. 140) was issued in order to repeal existing marriage laws for certain groups of the population, and to establish new rules with regard to marriages and dissolution of marriages. Introduction of this law was to mean the abolition of the Asian MarriageCodes. This law never came into force owing to administrative reasons.

There is now another draft Amendment of the Marriage Act. As in the Amendment of the Marriage Act 1973, the provisions with regard to permission for marriage have been simplified in the current draft, and the possibilities of dissolution of marriage by divorce and of legal separation have been broadened and simplified. The Asian Marriage Codes are not abolished as a result of this draft, however.

Statutory regulations with regard to marital rape and eviction of the wife are lacking. There are no reliable quantitative data available on the extent to which these phenomena occur. But social workers indicate that they are increasingly being confronted with these problems.

Article 16, Paragraph 1 sub d

(d) The same rights and responsibilities as parents, irrespective of their marital status, in matters relating to their children; in all cases the interests of the children shall be paramount;

Article 35 Paragraph 4 of the Constitution stipulates that parents have the same responsibilities towards legitimate and natural children. Parents are obliged to support and raise their minor children. The costs are shared according to income (Article 351 Civil Code). This obligation also applies to the father of a natural, illegitimate child, according to his financial means (Article 342Civil Code). The provision of the Constitution is not always carried through in the lower legislation. Thus the birth of a child is in principle registered by the father (Article 22 Civil Code). The legitimate children acknowledged by the father, bear the father's surname, while natural illegitimate children bear the mother's surname (Article 56 a Civil Code). The same applies to the nationality of the children (Article 3 of the Nationality and Residence Act).

There is also inequality with regard to the place of residence of children (Article 71 Civil Code). In principle, the child follows the place of residence of the person who has legal custody over him or her. If both parents have legal custody, then the child follows the place of residence of the father.

The following applies with regard to parental authority. During the marriage, both parents have custody of the children (Article 352 Civil Code). In principle, however, only the father excercises parental authoriy (Article 353 Civil Code). If there is no marriage, guardians will be appointed over the children. If the child was born out of wedlock, the mother is the legal guardian (Article 405 Civil Code.), unless she is a minor. If the marriage is dissolved by death, the surviving parent has custody over the child (Article 397 Civil Code). In case of divorce or separation, the court will determine guardianship and custody, respectively. According to Article 13 of the Marriage Act for Muslims, in case of divorce the cantonal court will determine guardianship and co-guardianship over minor children at the request of the parents or either one of them (Articles 282 and 299 Civil Code). If the married woman has been appointed guardian, then guardianship starts from the moment that she has accepted it, with the authority or support of her husband (Article 383a sib 2 Civil Code). Moreover, in accordance with Article 403 of the Civil Code, the husband of the mother-guardian also becomes a legal guardian through marriage. Articles 383a sub 3 and 403 of the Civil Code are in conflict with the principle of equality.

The following applies to opening a bank account for children. Banks still have the rule that if the parents are married, only the father can open a bank account for his minor child, and even without the mother's consent. Although both parents have custody of the child, custody is in principle exercised by the father.

In case of concubinage, only one parent is charged with guardianship. Generally speaking, this is the mother. She is then the legal representative of the minor child.

The Convention on the Rights of the Child, specifically states that the child cannot be discriminated against on the basis of birth. The Law on Inheritance has discriminatory stipulations for natural (illegitimate) children as opposed to legitimate children. Natural (acknowledged) children are discriminated vis-à-vis legitimate children with regard to the share of their inheritance. Legitimate children inherit equal parts from their mother. If the unmarried mother dies, her natural children inherit a smaller part of her estate than her legitimate children (Article 890-901 Civil Code). Inheritance law favors legitimate children over natural children in the division of the estate. It thus favors legal marriage over the traditional form of cohabitation (concubinage) and thereby recognizes certain traditional forms of cohabitation and does not recognize others. With regard to the father, it depends on the status of the child (legitimate or acknowledged). Legitimate children inherit a larger part of the father's estate than acknowledged children. Unacknowledged children do not inherit from the father.
If, however, a woman bears a child in wedlock from a man who is not her husband, this child enjoys direct protection and will be granted the same rights as the other children who were born within the marriage from both partners. The child is considered the legitimate child of the husband. If, however, the man fathers children out of wedlock, these rights do not apply. The male marriage partner has the option of denying the legitimacy of the child, the female marriage partner does not have this option (Articles 304 through 313 Civil Code). This is in conflict with the principle of equality.

In order to change the situation with regard to natural children and the Law on Inheritance, the National Women's Movement (NVB) , a women's organization, initiated the "Women and the

Law" project, in the context of legal aid to women. The following activities have been carried out within the framework of this project:

- production and broadcasting of three skits on the Law on Inheritance and the position of children in that law via TV and in the neighborhoods (1999)
- a monthly legal column in one of the daily newspapers since April 1996
- publication of the brochure "The Law on Inheritance in Suriname" (1997)
- a study by the Institute for Research and Development (IRD) commissioned by the NVB on the social position of legitimate and illegitimate children (1995)
- a seminar on the Law on Inheritance (1996).

During the information campaign of the NVB, the then Government decided in 1997 to abolish inequality between legitimate and illegitimate children within the Law on Inheritance. There are currently three bills which have to do with children, namely equality within the Law on Inheritance, parental visiting rights, and the right of children to be heard. The bill on Inheritance aims at eliminating the distinction between legitimate and natural children in law. The bill on parental visiting rights aims at providing visiting rights for the parent without custody, also in cases other than divorce. The bill on the right to be heard provides for minors to be heard in civil cases with regard to court decisions which involve them .

Article 16, Paragraph 1 sub e

(e) The same rights to decide freely and responsibly on the number and spacing of their children and to have access to the information, education and means to enable them to exercise these rights;

The right and access to contraceptives is laid down in antiquated legislation in the field of health care, whereby distribution of these contraceptives is prohibited. Despite this, the Lobi Foundation, a non-governmental organization, has been charged by the Government with providing education on family-planning and the distribution of contraceptives. As a result of the current economic malaise, clients/patients are now, unlike before, asked to pay for doctor's consultation and medication, with the result that contraceptives and medical guidance might become less accessible to poorer women.

Article 16, Paragraph 1 sub f

(f) The same rights and responsibilities with regard to guardianship, wardship, trusteeship and adoption of children, or similar institutions where these concepts exist in national legislation; in all cases the interests of the children shall be paramount;

With regard to legal custody of children, reference is made to remarks made under Article 16 Paragraph 1 sub d. Adoption occurs by court decision at the request of a couple (Article 342 k Civil Code). If the request for adoption has been granted, the child acquires the status of legitimate child (Article 342 Civil Code). Remarks under Article 16 Paragraph 1 sub d also apply to adopted children.

Article 157 (acknowledged and legitimate children) and Article 342 (natural llegitimate children) of the Civil Code provide for the right of a single parent to demand child support from the other partner.

Article 16, Paragraph 1 sub g

(g) The same personal rights as husband and wife, including the right to choose a family name, a profession and an occupation;

The right to choose a surname has not been explicitly regulated. However, in certain laws it is laid down that women should, in principle, be named by their husband's surname, for instance on identity cards, electoral registers, lists of candidates for the National Assembly, District and Local Councils, and in the Commercial Register (Article 5).

For the right to freely choose a profession and position, reference is made to remarks made under Article 11.

Article 16, Paragraph 1 sub h

(h) The same rights for both spouses in respect of the ownership, acquisition, management, administration, enjoyment and disposition of property, whether free of charge or for a valuable consideration.

In principle, everyone has the right to an undisturbed enjoyment of his or her property (Article 34 Paragraph 1 Civil Code). No provisions were found in the Civil Code which prevent the acquisition of property on the basis of gender. In the case of a marriage in community of property, it is laid down with regard to administration (acts of management and disposal) of goods that the property is under the administration of both spouses, and performance of legal acts will in certain cases require the permission and cooperation of the other spouse. Pursuant to Article 162 of the Civil Code, cooperation of both spouses is compulsory in the case of hire-purchase.

Inheritance can only take place upon death (Articlee 859 Civil Code). If the wife is the sole heir, she inherits the entire estate of her husband. If there are lagitimate children from the marriage, the estate is divided among the wife and these children. If the man has drawn up a last will and testament, this must be taken into account. Both widows and widowers fall under this same law. In this regard, there is no discrimnation of women in Suriname. The inheritance of widows and widowers is provided for in Article 862 Civil Code. Article 902 Civil Code indicates that the estate of a deceased person shall belong to his heirs in so far as he has not made a list will and testament. If a person mentions only one child in such a will, this may not reduce the right and legitimate portion of the other heirs (Article 943 Civil Code).

Women and women's organizations indicated during the consultation process that there is a traditional custom among the Maroon peples of the interior, that the woman whose husband has died, should have sex with the deceased man's brother as a kind of cleansing. There are no lgal provisions with respect to this, nor has research been carried out with respect to the measure to which this practise still occurs.

Article 16, Paragraph 2

The betrothal and the marriage of a child shall have no legal effect, and all necessary action, including legislation, shall be taken to specify a minimum age for marriage and to make the registration of marriages in an official registry compulsory.

According to the Civil Code (Article 111) engagements are no grounds for legal action to enter into marriage, and one is not obliged to pay compensation if the promise of marriage is not fulfilled. The case is different when the intended marriage has already been registered. In that case, legal action for compensation is possible, if expenses were actually made for the purpose of the marriage. The minimum age for marriage according to the Civil Code is 15 years for women and 18 years for men (Article 82). For marriages according to the Asian Marriage Codes, the minimum age for women has been set at 13 years and at15 years for men (Article 2 Marriage Act for Hindus and Marriage Act for Muslims). If these provisions have been violated, annulment can in principle be sought (Article 142 Civil Code).

Suriname is party to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, in which the age of adulthood is 18 years. In view of the minimum age at which people can enter into mariage, "child marriages" are therefore possible in Suriname. According to the traditional customs of the Maroon and Indigenous peoples of the interior, child marriages do occur, even though they are prohibited by law. Art. 297 Criminal Code provides that he who has sexual relations with a girl younger than twelve years of age shall be punished with imprisonment not exceeding twelve years. This would lead to the conclusion that the minimum age of consent is 12 years. Article 298 Criminal Code also states that he who has sexual relations out of wedlock with a woman who is older than twelve years but has not yet reached the age of fourteen, shall be punished with imprisonment of no more than eight years. There is no mention of age of for a man. According to Article 297 Criminal Code, having sex with a girl younger than twelve years of age is a criminal offence, even though such an act might be with the girl's permission. This is not in accordance with the legislation on age of marriage, i.e. respectively 15 years for a man and 13 years for a woman in case of the Asian Marriage Codes, and 18 years for the man and 15 years for the woman in case of the Civil Code of Marriage. However, there is no data on the measure to which child marriages do occur, nor with regard to the effect on the free choice of the girls involved to enter into marriage or not.

The following applies with regard to registration of marriages. Marriages are registered in the Register of Marriages (Article 36 Civil Code). Furthermore, notifications of marriage (free consent of future spouses) are registered in the Register of Intended Marriages (Article 3 Civil Code) and the required consent of parents, grandparents or guardians is also registered, in the Register of Consent for Marriages (Article 35a Civil Code). Pursuant to Article 21 of the Marriage Act for Muslims and Article 10 of the Marriage Acts for Hindus, the relevant marriage officer must register marriages entered according to either religion in the Register of Marriages.

Table 16.1: Number of Marriages according to Type of Marriage Act, 1993-1997

	1993		1994		1995		1996		1997	
	abs	%	abs	%	abs	%	abs	%	Abs	%
Civil Marriage	652	34	692	34	870	39	929	40	796	38
Hindu	910	47	922	46	1034	46	953	41	878	42
Muslim	380	20	403	20	345	15	428	19	399	20
Total	1942	100	2017	100	2249	100	2310	100	2073	100

Source: General Bureau of Statistics, 1998

Table 16.2: Average and Median Married Age according to Gender and Type of Marriage, 1992-1997

Year	Civil marriage		Hindu marriage		Muslim marriage		
	Male	Female	Male	female	Male	female	
1992	35.3	30.1	26.2	21.6	27.8	23.3	mean
	32.6	28.6	25.2	21.2	26.2	22.1	median
1993	35.7	30.6	26.1	21.7	28.7	24.0	mean
	33.5	29.1	25.0	20.8	25.3	22.0	median
1994	34.6	30.5	26.9	22.5	28.0	23.7	mean
	33.1	29.4	25.8	21.6	26.1	22.3	median
1995	35.3	30.6	27.0	22.8	28.5	23.8	mean
	33.1	29.0	25.7	20.3	26.7	22.4	median
1996	36.0	30.6	27.1	22.6	28.9	24.6	mean
	33.7	29.1	26.3	21.8	27.5	23.1	median
1997	35.6	30.4	28.3	23.1	29.5	24.1	mean
	33.8	29.4	27.1	22.3	28.1	23.3	median

Source: Central Civil Registry Office, 1998

Conclusions and Recommendations

General Conclusions and Recommendations

1. Suriname is a multi-ethnic society. Its cultural diversity is also manifested in the experience of women's rights, and in crucial areas there are discrepencies between CEDAW and current cultural patterns. There is a clear dilemma here: on the one hand culture cannot be made to legitimize discrimination of women, while on the other hand, the culture of a people should be treated with respect. The Government will have to develop strategies together with NGOs to further encourage the process of cultural change. Extensive education with regard to CEDAW is essential in this process.

2. The Constitution of the Republic of Suriname is the highest national law. It proceeds from the prohibition of discrimination, which also implies a prohibition of discrimination on the basis of gender. The Constitution furthermore proceeds from the principle of equality of men and women. In view of these provisions, the Constitution regulates the protection of women's rights and the equality of men and women to a great extent. However, there are statutory regulations in the lower legislation which contradict the Constitution and CEDAW. Some of these discriminatory laws are the Personnel Act, the Identity Act, the Nationality and Residence Act, the Holiday Act, the Elections Act and the Police Penal Law. The conflict of the lower legislation with the Constitution and CEDAW results from the fact that the Constitution and CEDAW are of relatively recent date – 1987 and 1981, respectively – as opposed to the older national legislation. For national legislation referring to gender equality in various areas of life, the following holds true, to a greater or lesser extent:
   - there are discriminatory provisions which have force of law, which are, however, no longer applied in practice;
   - legal provisions which have not been implemented, because of administrative reasons, among other things;
   - the factor of "gender" is not explicitly mentioned in the provisions as a criterion for the prohibition of discrimination;
   - the relevant provisions have not been adjusted to changing forms of cohabitation; because of this, concubinage, for instance, has not been generally recognized.

   In the past two decades, relevant measures have been taken by the Government as well as by non-governmental organizations to achieve equality of men and women in various areas. But these measures are insufficient. The discriminatory provisions should be abolished, while national legislation should be further reconciled with the Constitution and CEDAW. This means that the principle of equality should be integrated into the national legislation. The integration ('gender mainstreaming') should also be apparent in the development and implementation of policy, from the side of the Government as well as non-governmental organizations.

3. There are insufficient reliable gender-specific data available. This limited avaiaibility is an obstacle to the development of an adequate policy with regard to equality of men and women. Government and non-government agencies at all levels and in all sectors should be trained in the near future, with the goal of collecting gender-specific statistical data. Moreover, qualitative and quantitative studies on the position of women in various sectors should be carried out periodically.

Conclusions and Recommendations per Sector

a. Politics
Visibility of women in political decision-making bodies is limited, especially at higher levels. Existing measures and programs for increasing political participation must therefore be further extended.

b. Education
In the last decade, there have been positive developments in the area of education; more girls and women are participating in higher and more diverse forms of education. Stereotypes of women in curricula must, however, be corrected.

c. Labor
The number of women on the labor market is growing, although women are still under-represented in higher positions. Discriminatory provisions in the labour legislation must be abolished.

d. Health
The health care crisis has influenced the availability and accessibility of medical services for women. This concerns specific areas, such as: maternal and child care, birth control, sexually transmittable diseases and HIV/AIDS. Government and NGOs will have to take appropriate policy measures to solve the crisis in the near future.

e. Violence against Women
The number of police reports of violence against women is increasing, as well as the number of reports of specialized relief organizations. The increase is mainly the effect of increased awareness among women, as a result of extensive education during the last years.

f. Rural Women
The position of rural women is closely linked with the agricultural sector. This means that the problems in the agricultural sector and related sectors affect the position of rural women: poor infrastructure, limited markets, obstacles in availability and accessibility of agricultural land, obstacles with regard to agricultural credit. The situation is further worsened by low literacy rates, ignorance of existing regulations, lack of services and environmental polution. An integrated rural policy, which includes the areas populated by the Maroons and Indigenous Peoples, will contribute to improving the position of rural residents in general and rural women in particular.

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